A Conservative Introduction to the Old Testament

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By

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In Memory Of
My Father,
Samuel Jackson Cartledge, D. D.
1864 — 1940

PREFACE

The purpose of this *Introduction* is to enable the student to obtain a more intelligent insight into the study of the Old Testament. After dealing with certain general matters, we shall attempt to answer certain questions in regard to each book of the Old Testament: Who wrote it? When was it written? What was the historical background from which the book came? What is the main teaching of the book? What has been the history of its transmission to us? and so on. As we are able to answer such questions as these, we are able to make a more intelligent interpretation of the book. We seek to determine what the original author meant for his readers to get out of his book. When we have done that, we can apply those truths to the problems of our own age.

Those who have read the author's *A Conservative Introduction to the New Testament* will see that this volume follows the same general plan as that one did. The author strives for honesty and accuracy in his statements but seeks to avoid technicalities whenever possible. No attempt has been made to give all the details of all the theories that are now held in the field; the student who wishes to go more deeply into the matters suggested in this volume will find bibliographical hints in the footnotes and in the bibliography in the appendix.

Some readers may be disappointed that the author refrains from reaching certain conclusions at times. From the nature of the case it is impossible to reach the same degree of certainty in the field of Old Testament introduction that we are able to attain in the New Testament field. An honest scholar must recognize where certainty is possible and where it is not. A person can only weaken his case by claiming more for it than the facts warrant.

Where certainty cannot be reached, the author has attempted to present as fairly as possible the better theories that are now held, and then to present the evidence for and against them. The reader may then accept one of the theories as his own, or he may prefer to hold his opinion in abeyance.

Like the New Testament volume, this volume is written from the Conservative point of view. The author has made an honest attempt to evaluate other approaches with an open mind, but he has reached conclusions in harmony with the ancient beliefs of historic Christianity. Specifically, he believes in a personal God who created the universe and still governs it, and who can, when the occasion arises, work miracles to attain His desired ends. He believes that the Bible is the inspired Word of God, that Christianity is God's revelation of Himself to man rather than man's feeble effort to discover God. He believes in Jesus Christ as the God-man who died an atoning death for the sins of those who would believe on Him. He believes that no position taken in this volume is out of harmony with those great fundamental truths.

A Conservative has great respect for the past and seeks to conserve the truths of the past. He should not be bound, however, by the past. The Bible is an ancient book, but no one yet has attained to a perfect understanding of it. God expects us to make use of all the facts that may be brought to light from any quarter. We may also well spend some time in seeking to understand the better theories which the biblical scholars are using as they seek a fuller understanding of the darker places. We should emphasize the fact that it is not incumbent upon the Conservative to seek to defend every theory that has been handed down from ancient tradition. Many of the traditions can be shown to be mani-

festly false, while many others seem to be groundless guesses. We shall seek to give a fair evaluation of the traditions, giving especial attention to the testimony of the Bible itself.

The fact that the author seeks to present certain theories fairly and to show that the faith of Conservatives need not be disturbed even if they are held, is not to be taken as indicating that he considers such conclusions necessary or that he himself holds these positions.

A word of explanation should be spoken concerning the order in which the books of the Old Testament are presented. We have taken the divisions of the Jewish canon as our basis, though we have departed from it in certain respects. For the first division we have taken the historical books, including the Pentateuch, the books known as "the former prophets," and Chronicles, Ezra and Nehemiah; thus we may see the two complete historical surveys presented in the Old Testament. Next we have taken the prophetical books, including those known to the Jews as "the latter prophets." Instead of following the order of the Jewish canon, however, we have attempted to present them in chronological order as far as we are able to ascertain that order. The final section includes all the books in the section known as "the Writings" except the ones dealt with in the first section — Chronicles, Ezra and Nehemiah. In this section the chronological order is so uncertain that no attempt has been made to follow it.

The author wishes to thank several of his colleagues and friends in the ministry who have been kind enough to read the manuscript and make most helpful suggestions; the author is, of course, solely responsible for any errors and imperfections that may remain.

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Part One
General Introduction

I.

PRINCIPLES OF INTERPRETATION

When an author writes a book he seeks to make certain impressions upon someone else by means of the words which he writes. In an age like ours, all of us are writing and reading all the time, and we make use of the principles of interpretation without even thinking about them. In the case of the Old Testament, we are dealing with a library of books written thousands of years ago, written in a language belonging to a different linguistic family even from our own, written by Orientals rather than Occidentals. Moreover, the Bible is far more important to us than any other book. For these and other reasons we should become familiar with the principles of interpretation and learn how to apply them to the Bible.

The basic principle of interpretation is this: the context determined the meaning of the original writing; when the original context is restored, the original meaning will become evident.

We should recognize that the context is a complex matter. Many scholars divide the context into two parts, the grammatical and the historical, though there is real value in making an even fuller division into the grammatical, the historical, the literary, the logical and the psychological.[1]

(1) The five divisions of the context were worked out very carefully by the late Prof. W. M. McPheeters in his little book, *"Is a Science of Interpretation Possible?"* Private printing, out of print.

In dealing with the grammatical context we must let the words of the original language express just the meaning that the author meant for them to express. Manifestly we must come to know as much as possible about the vocabulary and grammar of the Hebrew language. No translation can hope to bring out exactly all the fine points of the original; the student who knows only English must always be somewhat at a disadvantage, though he can overcome that to a certain extent by comparing several translations and by going to the works of scholars who do use the Hebrew. The Hebrew language is a member of the Semitic family, while English is a member of the Indo-European; so the construction of the two is quite different in many fundamental matters. We should go to our passage and try to ascertain as accurately as possible what meaning the author meant these words to convey to his readers. We must be very careful not to read our ideas into the author's words, but to get his meaning from his words.

We must seek to get as much help as possible by reconstructing the historical background of the author and those to whom he wrote. We must try to see the occasion that called forth the book or a particular part of it. We must try to see how the author went about arriving at the solution of the particular problem involved. We must try to separate the eternal principles involved in the solution of these problems from the temporary application of those principles to changing ages and conditions.

We must deal fairly with the various literary forms used by our various authors. Much of the Old Testament is simple, matter-of-fact prose, a literary type with which we are all very familiar. But many other types are used, and each type must be handled aright if we expect to get the meaning that the author intended. Poetry must not be treated like prose, nor should alle-

gories nor parables nor metaphors nor similes nor apocalypses. At times it is easy to determine the literary type in use and then to know how it should be handled; at times there is room for real difference of opinion.

In dealing with the logical context we recognize that the writing was produced by a thoughtful mind. A small passage taken by itself may have various meanings, but when we put that passage in its larger context we can frequently see exactly what the author meant for those words to mean in this particular connection; we can see the train of his logic and the determining factor of it upon this part of the whole.

Then we must remember that a certain human individual was seeking to make a certain impression upon the minds of other individuals. We should try to understand as much as possible about the workings of the minds of the original author and his readers. We must remember especially that they were ancient Orientals rather than modern Occidentals. We should try to find out as much as possible about the mind of the individual author himself, because no two persons were ever the same.

When we realize the complexity of the complete context we recognize that it is impossible to attain the ideal of a complete reconstruction of it. Frequently important factors of the context are missing; while we are seeking for them, it is permissible and even necessary at times to fill them in by theory. It is not surprising, then, that there should be at times different interpretations of the same passage. A student who knows and applies these principles of grammatico-historical interpretation is in a position to discard many current interpretations as manifestly out of harmony with the context, to show that certain interpretations are certainly correct, and to know where he must remain in doubt and then to

know what the different possibilities are. There is a real science of interpretation, but all too many readers of the Bible are woefully ignorant of it and therefore read into the Bible ideas of which the authors never dreamed.

Higher, or Historical, Criticism

This term is used in contrast with the lower, or textual, criticism, which is discussed in the chapter on the transmission of the text. The terms "historical" and "textual" are in much more common use today than the older terms, "higher" and "lower."

The science of historical criticism seeks to determine the authorship, date, place, purpose and so on of the individual books that make up our Bible. Of course, it may be applied to any other documents as well, but we shall deal with it only as it is used in connection with our Old Testament documents.

Historical criticism can give us much information that will be most helpful in arriving at a true interpretation of a book or a passage from a book. It may give us help in reconstructing all phases of the context, especially the historical.

Scholars have dealt with the problems of historical criticism from very early times. At times they were far from scientific in their work, it is true, but they recognized the need of determining the answers to the questions raised by historical criticism. We shall be dealing with those problems throughout this volume.

At times the historical critic cannot find a definite answer to one of his questions, so he must fill in the gap in his facts by a theory or a tentative conclusion. This is a perfectly legitimate procedure, and theologians of all schools must use it from time to time. All students of intellectual honesty should be diligently searching for the facts in the field and should unite in accepting

every single fact that can be presented. They should seek to hold theories that are consistent with the facts, and only such theories as are consistent with all the known facts. They will not differ about the facts, but they may well differ about the theories as long as the various theories can be reasonably harmonized with the known facts.

Every student should strive to keep his mind at all times open to newly discovered facts. He should not be afraid of trying to understand and evaluate the theories of other students.

No student ever approached the study of historical criticism of the Bible with an entirely blank mind. Everyone has a body of beliefs about fundamental matters. When we find that one of our beliefs is not in harmony with new facts which we have discovered, we must adopt new beliefs that will be in harmony, because we believe thoroughly that the God of our faith is a God of truth, not of falsehood. Where facts are not available at a certain point, it is natural that the student will fill in with a theory that will be consistent with his fundamental beliefs; that is what all intelligent students of all shades of theology do. Naturally, students who have a different starting point will at times reach different conclusions.

In the field of historical criticism, there are two major schools of thought; for want of better names we may call them the "Conservative" and the "Radical." The Conservative believes in a personal, sovereign God, who created and who governs the universe, and who, when the occasion arises, can work what we know as a miracle to bring about His purposes. He believes specifically that God sent His Son Jesus, who was both God and man, into the world to make atonement for the sins of the world. He believes that the Bible is a super-

naturally inspired revelation of God's dealing with His people.[1] He believes that these beliefs are thoroughly consistent with all the known facts that can be assembled from any field. He will not differ with a Radical student when dealing with facts. The two may hold many theories in common. It is not surprising that at times they will differ about certain theories, the Conservative holding to that theory which is consistent with his fundamental beliefs and the Radical holding to that theory which is consistent with his.

Conservatives have no quarrel at all with higher, or historical, criticism as such; in fact, they use the science just as Radicals do. They can refuse to believe certain of the theories of the Radical critics. And scholars of all schools can regret the confusion of facts and theories found in the works of certain critics, both Conservative and Radical.

Radical criticism has at times been unnecessarily destructive. On the other hand, Conservative criticism has sought to defend entirely too much of what was based on mere tradition rather than on fact. It is not to be expected that all critics will ever come to a complete agreement so long as the fundamental differences between Conservatism and Radicalism exist. But Conservatives are making use of much that was developed by Radicals and finding it profitable, and the reverse is also true.

Archaeology

We cannot give anything like a full discussion of this large science; we wish simply to call attention to something of the contribution it can make to our study.

We have all too few documents contemporary with the books of the Old Testament from which we can reconstruct accurately the historical background. Writ-

(1) For a fuller discussion of the miraculous and the inspiration of the Bible see the author's *A Conservative Introduction to the New Testament*, appendices II and III.

ing was not nearly so common in antiquity as it is now, and many of the books that were written have perished.

The archaeologists have gone into Bible lands with their picks and shovels and have dug out of the ground many of the remains of the ancient civilization. Archaeology is a comparatively modern science, and new discoveries are being made all the time. Very few except the professionals can hope to keep well abreast of this rapidly developing field.

Many expect entirely too much from archaeology, and certain archaeologists have made claims that were entirely too sweeping. For example, it is impossible for archaeology to prove that the Bible is entirely correct in every historical detail. The fact is that archaeology has at times confirmed the truth of a biblical statement that had been attacked by certain scholars. It seems to indicate that we may have a high degree of confidence in the general historical reliability of the biblical records. Those have been services of real value to the Conservative; the Conservative should not weaken his case by going beyond what the facts really prove. Archaeology is a field that has attracted many amateurs; their works must be used with great care, if at all.

In recent years archaeology has proved that civilization had reached a high level and that writing was in use at least as early as the time of Abraham. Instead of treating everything earlier than Moses as purely legendary, we can believe that the biblical stories could have been based upon accurate written sources, whether those sources were recorded in final form in the time of Moses or centuries later. This pushing back of known civilization to these earlier times has made obsolete some of the negative conclusions of the earlier Radical critics.

Archaeology has at times given us some real help in arriving at dates for certain biblical events.

All in all, the student of the Old Testament would do well to read a good recent book in the field of archaeology from time to time and try to keep abreast of at least the major discoveries in this interesting and helpful field.

Progressive Revelation

The Old Testament covers a vast expanse of time. It is the record of God's dealing with His people during several millennia. God did not make a full revelation of Himself and His will all at once; man could not have taken it in if He had. God gradually revealed more and more as His people were able to comprehend. The later books of the Old Testament contain ideas far in advance of some found in the earlier books. And after the Old Testament, came the Saviour and the record of Him and His teachings in the New Testament.

The student must not make the mistake of basing his beliefs and conduct upon the beliefs and conduct of a person found in one of the ancient books of the Old Testament unless they are consistent with all the later revelation of God. We do not justify polygamy today because of the multiple marriages of the patriarchs or Solomon. There is much progress in doctrine and in practice throughout the Old Testament, and when the Old Testament comes to an end, it is still looking forward. Let us keep our interpretations of it consistent with its own spirit.

We shall see that it is not always possible to arrange the parts of the Old Testament in their chronological order; so we cannot always be sure of our tracing of the development of certain ideas and practices. Then we should remember that it is quite probable that the line of development does not always move steadily

upward with an unbroken curve. There are times when we must remain in doubt in applying the principle of progressive revelation, but it is very important that we be aware of it and do our best to follow it honestly.

We should call attention to certain dangers in connection with this principle, however. We must not think that God Himself has changed as the thought about Him has changed. God is the same throughout all eternity, but He has seen fit to reveal more and more about Himself as His people were prepared to receive more. It should be recognized also that the Conservative emphasizes the term "progressive *revelation*"; he does not think of the Bible as simply the record of the progressive discovery of truth. And he makes a definite distinction between the final stage of that revelation in the New Testament and the progressive interpretation of the revealed truth that is still going on.

II.

THE CANON OF THE OLD TESTAMENT

The word canon comes from the Greek word *kanon.* It meant a reed, a rod, a rule. It came to be applied to the authoritative list of books making up the Bible; it is in that sense that we are using the word in this context.

The various books of the Old Testament were written by many authors over a long period of time. Now we have an Old Testament made up of thirty-nine books. How did those books come together into one book? Why were those particular books selected? Such questions as these confront us in our study of the Old Testament canon.

Conservatives, who believe that the Bible is the inspired word of God, believe that the ultimate test of canonicity is inspiration; if a book was written under the inspiration of God's Spirit it belongs in the canon, while no uninspired book does.

There are some who think that each author was fully conscious of his inspiration, and that when he completed his book he deposited it in the temple and it was immediately considered a part of the sacred canon. The history of the canon, then, is simply the history of the production of the various books.

This view of the rise of the canon is probably entirely too simple. It does not take into consideration the possibility of books developing gradually, as in the case of the Psalms and possibly other books. It does not harmonize with the fact that many of the prophets met intense opposition while they lived, even from those in charge of the temple. Nor does it harmonize with the

few facts that we do have from the Old Testament itself and from the other historical sources for the study of the canon.

Almost certainly the various books circulated independently for a time after their composition. Then groups of books came together. Then the groups were put together to form the complete canon. Though even after the canon as a whole was formed there was some debate as to whether certain books deserved a place or not. Even today there are two views of the canon; the Catholic Church adds the books of the Apocrypha to the thirty-nine books of the Jewish and Protestant canon.

The first actual use of the word "canon" in our sense was made by the Christians of the fourth century A.D., but the concept of canonicity was much older than that. About the beginning of the Christian era the Jews began to speak of books that defiled the hands; these were the books that were considered their holy books, though we do not know just what was meant by the expression. The New Testament does not use that expression, but it recognizes the presence of an Old Testament by many references to it and quotations from it.

The Jews early divided the Old Testament into three divisions. The Law included the five books of the Pentateuch. The Prophets included the so-called Former Prophets: Joshua, Judges, Samuel and Kings; and the Latter Prophets: Isaiah, Jeremiah, Ezekiel and the Twelve Minor Prophets, making eight books in all. The Writings included Psalms, Proverbs, Job, the five Rolls (Song of Solomon, Ruth, Lamentations, Ecclesiastes and Esther), Daniel, Ezra-Nehemiah and Chronicles, making eleven books. With these divisions there were twenty-four books, but they are exactly our thirty-nine books. Some of the later Jews joined Ruth to Judges and Lamentations to Jeremiah to make the number

twenty-two, the number of letters in the Hebrew alphabet.

It is to be noted that this threefold division of the canon is not a division according to subject matter. The former and latter prophets are quite different. Daniel is not included in the prophets. Ezra-Nehemiah and Chronicles are separated from the books of Samuel and Kings.

Some try to explain these facts by the theory that the books of the law were written by Moses, that the books of the prophetic division were written by men who held the office of a prophet, while the books of the third division were written by men who simply enjoyed the prophetic gift. But Matthew 24:15 plainly calls Daniel a prophet, while Amos (7:14) resents being called a prophet.

Probably a much better theory is that the threefold division reflects the gradual development of the canon, the Law taking form first, then the Prophets, then the Writings. Books that naturally would have fallen in one of the earlier divisions were placed in the last division because the first two groups had already taken definite form.

The Old Testament itself gives certain hints along these lines. Exodus 40:20 says that the tables of the Law containing the Ten Commandments were placed in the Ark of the Covenant. Deuteronomy 31 says that the laws of Deuteronomy were given to the Sons of Levi to be deposited by the side of the Ark. So from very early times, at least parts of the Law were kept and considered authoritative. II Kings 22 tells about the finding of the Book of the Law in the time of Josiah and how Josiah used that as the basis of his great reformation; some scholars think that the find included

only Deuteronomy or parts of it, while others think that it included the whole of the Pentateuch.[1] Nehemiah 8:8 tells how Ezra and the priests "read in the book in the law of God distinctly, and gave the sense." Zechariah 7:12 speaks of "the law, and the words which the Lord of hosts hath sent in his spirit by the former prophets." Thus we see at least the beginning of the concept of a canon in the Old Testament itself.

About 432 B.C. the Samaritans were expelled from the Jewish colony by Nehemiah, and they founded the rival temple on Mount Gerizim. The Scriptures of the Samaritans were the Pentateuch alone. Although it is an argument from silence and not conclusive, it is probable that this fact indicates that at the time of the Samaritan split only the Pentateuch was recognized as Scripture.

Between 250 and 150 B.C. the Old Testament was translated from Hebrew into Greek. This translation is known as the Septuagint. It was started in the time of Ptolemy Philadelphus (285-247 B.C.) and finished before the Prologue to Ecclesiasticus (about 132 B.C.). The Septuagint did not follow the threefold division of the canon. All of the Jewish books were translated, and certain manuscripts of the Septuagint contain the apocryphal books and other books. Some scholars believe that the Septuagint proves that in Egypt there was a larger canon, a canon including all the books of the Catholic canon. It is quite probable, however, that all the books were not included in one roll or book for a long time after the translation. Then the earliest manuscripts of the Septuagint that we have do not give uniformly the books of the Catholic canon; some of them are absent in some manuscripts, and some manuscripts include books not included in the Catholic canon. The

(1) This will be discussed more fully in the introduction to the Pent.

limits of the canon must be considered very indefinite if we are to take the manuscripts of the Septuagint as our guide.

The Book of Ecclesiasticus, about 170 B.C., in chapters 44-50 has a hymn to the Fathers, praising the great heroes of Israel and making definite mention of the Twelve Prophets. In one place, 24:33, the author says: "I will yet pour out doctrine as prophecy and leave it unto generations of ages." It seems probable that the first two divisions of the canon were definite at this time, but it is possible that the third division was just indefinite enough to make the author feel that his work might be included in it.

The Prologue to Ecclesiasticus, written by the grandson of the author about 132 B.C., several times refers to the three divisions of the canon, the Law, the Prophets and the other books of our Fathers.

First and Second Maccabees, between 125 and 70 B.C., make reference to Daniel as being in the canon, say that Nehemiah made a collection of sacred books, and that Judas Maccabaeus collected all the books that remained after the destruction of Antiochus Epiphanes.

Philo, a Jew of Alexandria at the beginning of the Christian era, quotes from most of the Old Testament books but never from the Apocrypha.

The New Testament makes constant use of the Old Testament. It refers to "the scripture," "the scriptures," "the holy scriptures," "the sacred writings," "the law," "the law and the prophets," and in one place, Luke 24:44, "the law, the prophets and the psalms." It frequently introduces a quotation from the Old Testament by the formula, "it is written." Every book of the canon is quoted except Esther, Ecclesiastes, the Song of Solomon, Ezra, Nehemiah, Obadiah, Nahum and Zephaniah. The last three were parts of the Twelve, which

was from early times considered one book. There was evidently no occasion for the quoting of the other rather short books. Not a single quotation is made from one of the apocryphal books, though the New Testament authors knew those books and at times seem to have made use of them. The New Testament does not give a list of the Old Testament canon, but it indicates clearly that there was a body of sacred books with rather definately fixed limits, very close to, if not identical with, our canon of thirty-nine books.

Fourth Esdras, about 90 A.D., gives a fabulous story of how Ezra was inspired to reproduce the law that had been burned, writing ninety-four books, and being commanded to keep seventy of them secret. The passage is full of the unbelievable, but it does mention twenty-four books, possibly the ones of the Jewish canon, and it connects Ezra's name with it.

Josephus, about 100 A.D., has a rather long passage that bears on the subject of the canon. In it he has a threefold division, though somewhat different from the regular one. He has twenty-two books: five of Moses, thirteen of the Prophets, and four hymns and maxims for human life. Almost certainly he joined Ruth to Judges and Lamentations to Jeremiah, so that his list is our present list. He also brings the canon to a close in the time of Artaxerxes, the time of Ezra-Nehemiah. Josephus shows us that the canon was very definite in his day, but we cannot be at all sure that his information is correct about the canon reaching its final form in the time of Ezra.

The Jewish Mishna tells us that there was a council of Jewish rabbis held at Jamnia about 90 A.D., and that this council put the stamp of its approval upon a canon made up of just our thirty-nine books. However, there were debates in Jewish circles even after that time about

Proverbs, the Song of Solomon, Ecclesiastes and Esther, though the debates seem to have had very little influence outside of scholarly circles.

We come now to the practice of the Christian Church. All of the Church Fathers had at least the thirty-nine books of the Jewish canon.[1] Some of the Fathers, however, bring in the books of the Apocrypha. The same is true of the early versions. The earlier Fathers seem to have held to the strict canon as truly inspired and authoritative, though some of them made use of the apocryphal writings, considering them of real value but not on a par with the canonical books. Then this distinction comes to be neglected by the later Fathers in the Western Church. Jerome, around 400 A.D., definitely rejects the authority of the apocryphal books; but Augustine in North Africa, a contemporary of Jerome, swings the thought of the Western Church in favor of the Apocrypha. Under his influence, the Council of Hippo (393) and the two Councils of Carthage (397 and 419) gave their approval to the Apocrypha. Augustine himself seems to have placed the apocryphal books on a somewhat lower level in his own thinking, but those who followed him were not as a rule so discriminating.

Even after this time in the Western Church there were some who rejected the authority of the Apocrypha or who placed them in a secondary position.

When we come to the time of the Reformation, however, we find the Protestants and the Catholics taking an entirely different position in regard to the Apocrypha. Luther and the other reformers definitely excluded the Apocrypha from their canonical books, though they placed them together and put them between the Testaments, a position which they continued to occupy in most Protestant Bibles until about the middle of the

(1) With a very few minor exceptions in regard to Chronicles and Esther.

nineteenth century. Now, more logically, they are omitted entirely from the Bible and published only in a separate volume in Protestant circles.

But the Catholic Church put an end to all debate in Catholic circles at the Council of Trent (1546). That Council definitely stated that the apocryphal books were to be considered as equal in authority and canonical value to the other books of the Bible; an anathema was pronounced upon anyone who would not accept "as sacred and canonical the said books entire with all their facts." Thus the Catholic Church has all of the thirty-nine books of the Jewish and Protestant canon plus the Apocrypha, seven complete books and parts of two others: Tobit, Judith, Wisdom, Ecclesiasticus, Baruch, I and II Maccabees and additions to the canonical books of Esther and Daniel.

It is to be regretted, of course, that all branches of the Church did not reach uniformity in regard to the Old Testament canon; there is complete agreement as to the canon of the New Testament.

The fact that Protestants do not accept the apocryphal books as canonical should not blind them to the fact of the real worth of the books. They contain much information about the history of the times between the Testaments, and they give us some vivid pictures of the religious thought of those times. We can get facts and real inspiration from these books.

We should remember that there were other books also produced by the Jews in the times between the Testaments and even into Christian times. They are known as the "pseudepigrapha." The student may find them in the large work of R. H. Charles, "The Apocrypha and Pseudepigrapha of the Old Testament," along with a critical introduction to each book.

III.

THE TRANSMISSION OF THE TEXT

We do not have any of the original manuscripts of any of the books of the Old Testament. All of them have been destroyed, we may be sure. Between the latest books of the Old Testament and the earliest manuscripts of them stretches a period of many hundreds of years. During this period the text was handed down from age to age by means of copies made by hand. Anyone who has tried to do any copying himself knows that it is impossible to avoid some errors in copying a document of any appreciable length. The manuscripts which we now have differ somewhat among themselves. Which one of them is to be preferred, if any one? Can any one be considered an accurate reproduction of the original books? Is it possible to obtain from all the evidence extant anything that can be considered an accurate reproduction? With such questions as these the science of textual criticism deals. Manifestly it will be impossible to give anything like a full treatment of this highly technical study at this time, but every student of the Old Testament should be familiar with at least some of the most important facts and principles involved in it.

Students familiar with the textual criticism of the New Testament will recognize that the principles are the same as they apply to both Testaments. But the history of the transmission is different in many important factors. It will become clear that we cannot assert the same high accuracy of reproduction for the Old Testament that we can for the New, but even so we may be comforted by Kenyon's assurance that no doctrine of any importance depends upon a disputed passage in

the text.[1] We wish, however, to get just as close to the original text as is possible with the materials available; that is the task of textual criticism.

The Hebrew Manuscripts

As the Old Testament was written in Hebrew, the Hebrew manuscripts must be considered of primary importance in reconstructing the original text. Yet the earliest Hebrew manuscripts come from the ninth and tenth centuries A. D. and are thus separated from the originals by a thousand years and more.

The student naturally wonders what became of the older manuscripts. The Jews, when one of their manuscripts began to get worn, would make a careful copy of it and then assign the old manuscript to a "Gheniza," a wooden box which each synagogue had for the purpose of receiving worn and imperfect copies. When the box became crowded, the manuscripts were buried or otherwise destroyed. Some of the extant manuscripts came from those old storehouses, but most of the manuscripts were eventually destroyed. The persecutions of the Jews likewise played their part in destroying the Hebrew manuscripts.

When the extant Hebrew manuscripts are studied carefully, it becomes clear that they are almost identical. Some scholars go so far as to say that all of them are exceedingly accurate copies of one Hebrew manuscript, though that is probably taking the matter a bit too far. All of them, however, do present substantially what is known as the Massoretic text. Let us trace briefly the history of the rise of that Massoretic text.

The earliest evidence that we have as to the Hebrew text used by the Jews is that which comes to us from the Targums. The Targums were paraphrases of the

(1) *Our Bible and the Ancient Manuscripts*, Sir Frederic Kenyon, Harper, 1940, p. 23.

Hebrew Old Testament in Aramaic. When the Jews returned from captivity they brought the Aramaic language with them. It was not long before Hebrew became a dead language. When the Old Testament was read in the synagogues, it was necessary for the reader to give a paraphrase of it in the language the people could understand. After a time these paraphrases were systematized and reduced to writing; they were known, then, as the Targums. There were two types of Targums, the Babylonian and the Palestinian. The earliest and best of the Targums is that ascribed to Onkelos, a Babylonian Targum on the Pentateuch; it was produced probably in the third century A. D., but it, of course, reflected a more ancient tradition. The next most important Targum is that of Jonathan ben Uzziel of about the fourth century, a Targum on the prophets.

At times we cannot reconstruct the Hebrew behind the Targums, because they were paraphrases rather than literal translations. But when we can, we can be sure that we have the Hebrew text that was accepted by the Jewish scholars themselves. And it is probable that they reflect quite accurately the text which seems to have been approved by the Jewish Synod of Jamnia, about 90 A. D. The text of the Targums presents some divergences from the later Massoretic text, but relatively few.

The next stage is that of the Talmud. The Talmudists explained and commented upon the Hebrew text. From their comments we can frequently determine the text on which they were commenting. The period of the Talmud is approximately 275 to 500 A. D. They had a Hebrew text very similar to that of the Massoretes.

The final stage is that of the Massoretes. This started about the beginning of the seventh century. The headquarters for the Massoretic school was in Tiberias, but

the work was not confined to one place or time. The Massoretes undertook the task of editing the books of the Old Testament in accordance with the traditions preserved in the Talmud.

It should be recognized that the Hebrew alphabet has only consonants. For a long time there was no indication written in the text as to what the vowels were. The vowels were handed on by oral transmission. The Targums and the Talmud at times tell us what the vowels were, though they often reflect much uncertainty. One of the important things that the Massoretes did was to provide a system of vowel points to go with the consonantal text. The student today should not consider the present vowel points as part of the inspired text; they reflect only the tradition current in the time of the Massoretes.

The Massoretes not only edited the consonantal text and added vowel points; they added to the margins of their manuscripts notes of a textual nature known as the Massorah. There were times when the Massoretes were convinced that the current Hebrew text was incorrect, but they would not dare to change it; rather they would place the reading which they considered superior in the margin. These superior marginal readings were called *Keri* (read), while the inferior readings of the text were called *Kethiv* (written).

The Massoretes likewise made many calculations to insure the correct copying of their texts. They counted the verses, the words and the very letters of every book. They calculated the middle word and middle letter of each one. In such ways as these they sought to preserve every jot and tittle of the text. Minute regulations were laid down as to the copying of manuscripts, the kinds of skins that might be used, the length of the columns, the number of letters to a line, the space to be left

between words, the kind of ink to be used and the final checking for accuracy, with the destruction of copies that failed to meet the high standards.

All of the extant Hebrew manuscripts were produced on the basis of the work of the Massoretes. It is not surprising, then, that they are almost identical manuscripts. And although they come from the ninth century and later, they may be considered faithful reproductions of the Jewish text of about the time of the Synod of Jamnia, as the Talmud and the Targums take us very close to that time.

As all the extant Hebrew manuscripts are very much alike, there is no need of dealing with the individual manuscripts. The oldest manuscript we have is one in the British Museum, a manuscript of the Pentateuch of the ninth century. The oldest manuscript that contains a trustworthy date is one of the Prophets written in 916, the Leningrad manuscript. Some other manuscripts claim an earlier date, but their dates are generally considered fraudulent.

How accurate a reproduction of the original text can the Massoretic text be considered? Before we attempt to answer that question, let us examine some of the rest of the evidence.

The Samaritan Pentateuch

At some time not far from 400 B. C. the Samaritans were expelled from the Jewish community, probably in the time of Ezra and Nehemiah. They set up a rival temple on Mount Gerizim and there carried on a worship somewhat like that of the Jews. As their Scriptures they had only the Pentateuch; so we get no help for the text in other parts of Scripture. From the Samaritan Pentateuch we are able to derive a text that was handed down by a tradition independent of any contact with the Hebrew tradition. The Samaritan Pentateuch was

written in the old Hebrew characters rather than in the more modern square characters derived from the Aramaic alphabet.

The oldest manuscript of the Samaritan Pentateuch comes from the tenth century. All of the manuscripts are in book rather than in roll form, except for three rolls at Nablus. None of them has any vowel points or accents.

When the first copy of the Samaritan Pentateuch came to the attention of scholars in 1616, great things were expected of it; but it did not live up to those expectations. The great Hebraist, Gesenius, in 1815, after a careful study of all its variants from the Massoretic text, came to the conclusion that in hardly a single instance was the Samaritan reading to be preferred to the Massoretic. In recent years, however, scholars have questioned the sweeping character of Gesenius' conclusion and are coming to give somewhat more consideration to the Samaritan readings.

Some of the Samaritan variants are quite evidently errors. Some were made for the purpose of justifying the Samaritan worship on Gerizim. No scholar would care to follow all the Samaritan readings in preference to the Massoretic; neither should they be rejected as a whole. The variants must be respected as coming from an ancient, independent textual tradition, and each one must be tested and evaluated by the principles of internal evidence.

The fact that the Samaritans had only the Pentateuch makes their Scriptures of less value to us, because there are fewer real problems in the text of the Pentateuch than in any other part of the Old Testament.

The Septuagint

After the return from the captivity, many of the Jews became scattered over the whole of the ancient world.

Large numbers of them went down to Egypt. After a time, many of them could not use Hebrew or even Aramaic. For them and for others who wanted to read the Scriptures and could not read Hebrew, the time had come for the Hebrew Scriptures to be translated into Greek, the language that every educated person could understand after the conquests of Alexander the Great.

The traditional origin of the Greek Old Testament is recorded in a letter purporting to have been written by Aristeas to his brother Philocrates in the reign of Ptolemy Philadelphus (285-246 B. C.). Most scholars believe that the letter was actually composed about 100 A. D. The story runs, though, that King Ptolemy wanted a copy of the Jewish Scriptures for the great library he was collecting in Alexandria. He freed all the Hebrew slaves and then sent an embassy with great gifts to the high priest at Jerusalem, begging him to send a copy of the Scriptures with scholars to translate them into Greek. Six translators were selected from each of the twelve tribes, and they were sent with a copy of the Law written in letters of gold. When they reached Egypt they received an enthusiastic welcome. Afterwards they went about their work independently, later comparing their results, thus producing the translation known as the Septuagint, or Version of the Seventy, or the LXX. Later the story took on more wonderful details; finally it was said that each translator worked entirely independently and translated the whole of the Scriptures in exactly seventy-two days, and that when the separate translations were compared they were found to be identical.

Obviously, little credence can be given to all the wonderful details of the letter of Aristeas. It is possible that King Ptolemy may have wished a copy for his

library; it is quite probable that the translation was begun in Egypt at some time near 250 B. C.

Students of the Septuagint can easily recognize that the translation was not made by any one person or group but by many persons of differing abilities and styles of translation.

The Prologue to the book of Ecclesiasticus, written in 132 B. C., says that the Law, the Prophecies and "the rest of the books" had been translated into Greek; so evidently the Septuagint was completed somewhat before that time. It is probable that the work of translation occupied about a century, between 250 and 150 B. C. Other books besides our thirty-nine books were also translated, but that fact need not enter into our thought at this point.

The Septuagint is a translation, and no translation can reproduce all features of the text in the original language. Usually, however, the Septuagint follows the Hebrew so slavishly that it gives us much exact information as to the Hebrew text used by the translators. The more slavish the translation is, the more help it gives in reconstructing the Hebrew original.

But the Septuagint gives us testimony concerning the Hebrew text at the very early time of 250-150 B. C. And although we do not have any of the original manuscripts of the Septuagint, the manuscripts we do have are older by half a millennium than any of the Hebrew or Samaritan manuscripts. The Septuagint also gives us the text of the whole Old Testament, rather than that of only the Pentateuch.

Many of the best manuscripts of the Septuagint are the same as our best New Testament manuscripts.

The finest manuscript is the *Codex Vaticanus*, or "B," a manuscript of the middle fourth century A. D. It gives all of the Old Testament except for certain gaps

in Genesis, II Samuel and Psalms. For the most part its text is very pure, as it is in its New Testament section. Most printed editions of the Septuagint follow "B" very closely.

Codex Sinaiticus, or Aleph, is also a splendid fourth-century manuscript, although unfortunately only parts of it are extant. This great Bible manuscript was bought by the British Museum some years ago for a half million dollars.

Codex Alexandrinus, or "A," is also in the British Museum. It was written in the fifth century, and its text is complete with the exception of a few lacunae.

One of the most remarkable manuscript finds of all times was the discovery of the Chester Beatty papyri in 1930. At that time, Mr. Chester Beatty bought from a dealer in Egypt a group of papyri, most of which proved to be biblical ones. Included were seven portions of Old Testament manuscripts from the very early dates of the second to the fourth centuries A. D., the Chester Beatty Papyri IV through XI. All of these papyri are somewhat fragmentary, but together they give us large portions of text from a very early time.

There are many other papyri, and uncial and cursive manuscripts of the Septuagint, though these are some of the most important of them. From the mass of these Septuagint manuscripts scholars must seek to determine as nearly as possible what the original Septuagint text was. This is still an incomplete task, though Tischendorf, Swete, Brooks and McLean and Rahlfs have done some splendid work in the field.

When the text of the Septuagint can be ascertained and then the Hebrew back of it, we can see that there are many important variations between it and the Massoretic text. The dates and figures, especially, vary widely at times. At times the order of sections within

books is changed considerably. At times long insertions are made in the canonical books. And translations were made of the apocryphal books and some other ancient literature.

The relative value of the Septuagint and the Massoretic texts is still a matter of debate. The fact that the translation was made at such an early date and that we have such ancient manuscripts of it makes us consider its evidence of great importance. But still it is a translation, and there are some marks of careless work in it. Virtually all modern scholars still prefer the Massoretic text and follow it regularly in their translations. We can at least say that the Septuagint readings are very ancient and deserve to receive careful consideration by means of the internal evidence.

Other Sources of Evidence

There were many other ancient versions of the Old Testament, but no one of them is as important as the Septuagint. There were three other translations made into Greek in the second and third centuries A. D.: those of Aquila, Theodotion and Symmachus; for the most part these translations have not even been preserved. Beginning about the second century A. D. several translations were made into Syriac, the most important being the Peshitto. Several versions came from Egypt, the most important being the Bohairic and the Sahidic; the translations go back to the second century A. D., but the manuscripts are somewhat later and are all fragmentary. The Old Latin Version was translated from the Greek and exists only in fragmentary form. The Latin Vulgate is of somewhat more importance; it was translated by Jerome about 400 A. D., and he used the Hebrew as well as the Greek Old Testament. It has been preserved in many hundreds of manuscripts and is the official Bible of the Roman

Church today. Manifestly no one of these later versions is to be preferred to the primary witnesses, though their readings cannot be dismissed without being tested by the internal evidence.

The quotations of the Church Fathers and the quotations in the New Testament are also evidence, though usually they follow the Septuagint or one of the other versions.

Evaluation of the Evidence

The mass of evidence is so great that scholars are far from completing their work on it and reaching definite conclusions about it. They seek to evaluate their variants by external and internal evidence.

The external evidence deals with the Massoretic Hebrew, the Samaritan Pentateuch, the Septuagint and the other versions as a whole, seeking to determine the relative value of their texts from what they know of their history and can find out by applying the internal evidence to large numbers of their variants. At present the tendency is to give first place to the Massoretic Hebrew, to put the Septuagint and Samaritan Pentateuch somewhat lower, and the other versions rather far down the line.

But because the three major external witnesses are as close together as they are, we must give relatively more value to the internal evidence.

Internal evidence is of two sorts, the intrinsic and the transcriptional.

In applying the intrinsic evidence, we seek to determine in the case of each individual variant what the original author probably wrote. One variant may make nonsense, whereas the other is in perfect harmony with the author's thought; the second is manifestly the true reading. We should know as much as possible about the author's train of thought, his style, his favorite

words and constructions, and so on as we try to apply the intrinsic evidence. At times this evidence leads to very certain results; at times, to probable results; at times it gives no help whatever.

In applying the transcriptional evidence, we seek to determine the original reading in the case of the individual variants from what we know of the way scribes went about their work of transcribing their manuscripts. In each textual problem we try each variant in turn as the original reading and try to see how the other variants arose as scribal errors. At times one variant will stand out as definitely the original reading and the other, or others, as scribal errors. Often the evidence is not so decisive; at times, the transcriptional evidence gives no help whatever. The transcriptional evidence presupposes a thorough familiarity with manuscripts, with the Hebrew and the other languages of the manuscripts under consideration and with the habits of scribes and the types of errors they are accustomed to make. Some of the errors seem to have been intentional, though the vast majority were unintentional, such as skipping from one like ending to another, confusing similar letters, mistaking similar sounds when copying from dictation, forgetting what the eye has seen or the ear has heard, not knowing what to do about words in the margin, and so on.

By applying the external evidence and the two kinds of internal evidence to the places where there are variant readings in the text, we are able to determine with a high degree of certainty which is the original reading in many places. In many places our results can be considered only probable. There are still many places where no degree of certainty can be reached with the evidence now available to us.

As yet there is no real critical text of the Hebrew Old Testament like that of the Westcott-Hort text of the New

Testament. The printed texts simply print the Massoretic Hebrew as their text. All of the other evidence is still printed in the critical apparatus at the foot of the page. Students who know Hebrew and textual criticism can seek their own text by a diligent use of the text and critical apparatus in such a work as Kittel's *Biblia Hebraica.*[1] English students can get some idea of the variants from the marginal readings in the translations or from commentaries, though very seldom can they give any true evaluation to them unaided.

We regret that the text of the Old Testament is still an unsolved problem. But again we should emphasize the fact that the uncertainty applies to the details rather than to the large matters. Our religion, our faith and practice are not made uncertain by any of the uncertainties of the exact form of the Hebrew original. Scholars are still at work in this great field, in all its various branches. It is quite possible that more certainty can be reached if they continue to make diligent use of the materials God has made available to them.

(1) Third Edition, Stuttgart, 1929-1937.

Part Two
The Historical Books

THE PENTATEUCH
THE FORMER PROPHETS
CHRONICLES
EZRA-NEHEMIAH

IV.

THE PENTATEUCH

The word "Pentateuch" comes from two Greek words meaning "five rolls" and is used to refer to the first five books of the Old Testament. They are also called the Law (Hebrew *Torah*), the books of Moses, or simply Moses. These books constitute the first division of the Jewish canon, which is made up of the Law, the Prophets and the Writings.

Some scholars prefer to use the term "Hexateuch" and include the book of Joshua in this first group. There is, of course, a close relationship between the Pentateuch and Joshua, but in most respects that same relationship runs on through the books of Judges, Samuel and Kings. It seems preferable to continue to use the more familiar term, the Pentateuch. The term Hexateuch is often used to make any theory of Mosaic authorship impossible; the term Pentateuch may be used without prejudice to any theory of authorship.

THE ORIGIN OF THE PENTATEUCH

For the last two centuries the question of the origin of the Pentateuch has been the subject of intense debate. An immense literature has been produced. It would be

impossible to give the details of the debate within the limits of this volume, yet every intelligent student of the Old Testament ought to be familiar with the main facts involved and some of the more important theories that have been used to interpret those facts. More advanced students can use their own judgment as to how far they wish to follow the intricacies of the question.

In general, there are two main theories as to the origin of the Pentateuch. The older theory considers these books as the work of Moses, while the newer theory considers them the product of a period of development which reached its final stage long after the time of Moses. There are, of course, differences in detail within each of these theories.

Many have thought that it was necessary for all Conservatives to hold to the theory of Mosaic authorship and for all Radicals to believe in the developmental theory. It is true that many who hold to the developmental theory do so in an attempt to explain the origin of the Pentateuch as a purely natural development, denying any true theory of inspiration or revelation. Yet we should realize that there is nothing in the developmental theory *per se* that interferes with any intelligent theory of inspiration or revelation. Every Conservative should recognize clearly that no theory of inspiration is worth having that is out of harmony with the facts of the Bible itself. Conservatives should be just as zealous in their search for facts as anyone else, and should then hold to those theories that most satisfactorily explain and harmonize with the facts.

The Theory of Mosaic Authorship

This theory goes back to very ancient times. It grew up ages before anyone thought of applying critical methods to the solution of problems of origin. However,

there are those who believe that this theory can still be defended by the methods of historical criticism.

It should be clearly recognized that the books themselves are anonymous. The titles, such as "The First Book of Moses, Called Genesis," were not parts of the original books; they can be considered only as evidence of an ancient tradition.

Moses is always referred to as the hero, rather than the author, of these books. Only in the addresses of Moses is the first person of the pronoun used in reference to him. It is, of course, possible for an author to write about himself in the third person, but it is hardly common; every student, though, remembers just that kind of thing in his reading of Caesar, for example.

Exod. 24:4, Deut. 31:9 and Deut. 31:24-26 refer to Moses as writing "all the words of the Lord," "this law" and "the words of this law in a book," but the contexts of these passages make it rather clear that these claims of Mosaic authorship are made only for parts of the Pentateuch rather than for the books as a whole.

Although Moses is not mentioned in the book of Genesis, he appears on nearly every page of the last four books. At times he is the hero of the action. At times he is receiving the commands of God and passing them on to the people. While it is not stated definitely that he was the author of the books in their present form, he is consistently pictured as the responsible guarantor of the contents of the vast majority of the last four books of the Pentateuch.

Other books of the Old Testament speak of " the law of Moses," "the book of the law of Moses," "the book of Moses," "a book of the law of the Lord given by Moses," and so on.[1] These passages indicate a belief that Moses had written at least some laws that had been

(1) E. g., I Kings 2:3; Neh. 8:1; Neh. 13:1; II Chron. 34:14.

preserved. It is possible that these later books were referring to our five books. It must be admitted, however, that in no one of these passages can it be proved conclusively that the reference was to the whole of the Pentateuch.

Other books of the Old Testament refer to the Pentateuch or parts of the Pentateuch in such a way as to show that the books, or parts of the books, were in existence before the time of writing of these later books. We must be careful to see what these references prove and what they do not prove. At times this becomes a highly technical problem. Before we can prove anything, we must know the date of the passage that does the quoting or makes the reference. Even when we can determine the date of the book as a whole, we must be aware of the possibility of later additions to the book (though we must also avoid a train of reasoning in a circle in such matters).

Then we must see how much is included in the reference. The most that can be hoped for in this line of proof is that certain parts of the Pentateuch can be shown to have been in existence in comparatively early times — how much and how early are points that are still hotly debated.

We must now consider the testimony of the New Testament. Jesus spoke of "the book of Moses" (Mark 12:26 in reference to Exod. 3:6). He said, "Offer the gift that Moses commanded" (Matt. 8:4, referring to Lev. 14:4). He said, "Moses because of the hardness of your hearts suffered you to put away your wives" (Matt. 19:8; cf. Deut. 24:1). In the parable of Dives and Lazarus, He speaks of "Moses and the prophets," probably referring to the whole Old Testament (Luke 16:31). In Luke 24:44 He speaks of the things "which were written in the law of Moses, and in the prophets

and in the psalms, concerning me." These and other similar passages have been taken to indicate that Jesus believed and taught that Moses was the author of the Pentateuch. This evidence is worthy of the most serious consideration, especially by those of us who believe in the deity of Jesus Christ and in the truthfulness of the Gospel records that report these sayings of His.

Such passages as these are weighty evidence that Jesus thought of the Pentateuch in its present form as Mosaic, but they lack something of being positive proof. We refer to books today by the name of their heroes as well as of their authors; when we say "the book of Samuel" we do not mean to say that we believe that Samuel was the author of the book. When Christ said, "Moses said," He may have been speaking popularly, as we would say, "Philemon said." In that case we would be quoting from an epistle written to Philemon by Paul. Likewise Jesus may not have been giving any consideration whatever to the question of the authorship of the Pentateuch. Or He may have been referring to some particular law that came from Moses rather than to the Pentateuch as a whole. Even though it could be proved that Jesus did speak of the whole of the Pentateuch as of Mosaic authorship, it is possible for a Conservative to believe either that He was adapting His speech to the belief current in His day or that He may have seen fit to limit His omniscience in regard to minor historical matters, as we know He did in regard to the time of His second coming. Jesus certainly never entered into any of the debates of modern critical problems, as He had matters of far greater importance to deal with; just as He did not come to teach the men of His age about the shape of the earth nor any other truths of modern natural science. As God, Jesus had all knowledge; yet when He became man He emptied, or humbled, or limited Himself in certain respects, and it may be

that He allowed His knowledge to be subject to the limitations of His time in details that did not destroy His authority in spiritual matters.

The writers of the New Testament books frequently make the same kinds of references as those we have seen coming from the words of Jesus, as a glance at the word "Moses" in a concordance will show. Again we should recognize this as very weighty evidence but not positive proof.

When we examine tradition outside of the Bible itself, we find the same kind of thing. When finally questions of authorship came to be discussed as such, Moses was accepted as the author of the whole work. And until very recent times the tradition of the Mosaic authorship was universally accepted without challenge.

Recently attempts have been made to defend the theory of Mosaic authorship by showing the connection between the language of the Pentateuch, especially the Egyptian stories in it, and the language and customs of Egypt.[1] Some scholars believe that the evidence is so weighty that it proves conclusively that the author must have been thoroughly at home when dealing with Egyptian matters, which would certainly fit in well with what we know of Moses. Others do not believe the evidence is definite enough to place the author in Egypt in Mosaic times; they think that the author's knowledge of Egypt may have been derived from contact with Egypt at a much later date. We may wait expectantly for more information from archaeology on this rather important point.

One of the great objections to the theory of Mosaic authorship used to be that Moses could not have written the Pentateuch because writing was not known in his day. That objection has been completely demolished

(1) Cf. *The Language of the Pentateuch in its Relation to Egyptian.* A. S. Yahuda, Oxford, 1933.

by archaeology, especially by the discovery of the Tell el-Armana letters and the Ras Shamra tablets. It is definitely known that writing was in existence long before the time of Moses. We now know that a language very much like, if not identical with, our Hebrew was in actual use in Mosaic times in places where Moses could easily have used it.

Some of the critics of the theory say that the Pentateuch reflects too high a degree of civilization for the Mosaic age and for a simple, nomadic people. But again archaeology has come to the defense of the traditional theory. Even as early as Abraham there was a high degree of civilization all the way from Mesopotamia down to Egypt. Very few scholars would care to treat the story of the Exodus as pure fable, as was done by many not many years ago. The Israelites were not a group of primitive nomads. They had come from a land where civilization was at a very high level. Moses himself is pictured as having had the advantage of all the culture and education of the court of that land. The Israelites were going from Egypt to a land that they expected to make their permanent home. And it is surely within the bounds of verisimilitude that Moses would have been able to draw up a rather detailed code of laws, especially under the inspiration of God, to enable them to meet the conditions which could be foreseen. Detailed legal codes were in existence long before the time of Moses, as the Code of Hammurabi clearly proves.

Thus we see that there are many very significant and weighty points of evidence in favor of the traditional theory of Mosaic authorship, and also that many of the former objections to the theory have been completely removed by fuller knowledge of the facts. Let us now look at the other competing theory.

The Documentary Hypothesis

In the eighteenth century the theory of Mosaic authorship was seriously challenged by certain scholars, and their number increased greatly in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. Let us see some of the facts and theories that were used.

There are certain parts of the Pentateuch that seem clearly to have been written after the time of Moses. The last chapter of Deuteronomy gives the account of the death of Moses; very few would care to believe that Moses supernaturally foresaw his own death and wrote his own obituary. Most scholars who hold to the Mosaic authorship of the Pentateuch at least admit that this chapter was a later addition; but if one thing could be added later, could not other things, too?

In Gen. 12:6 are the words, "And the Canaanite was then in the land," implying that the Canaanites were no longer in the land when the book was written, which would be considerably after the time of Moses. But the implication may be simply that the Canaanites were in the land as early as the time of Abraham.

In Gen. 14:14 Dan is mentioned, though Judges 18:29 says that Laish was not called Dan until the time of the judges. This may be a telltale anachronism, though it is possible that there were two Dans, or that a later scribe inserted the more familiar "Dan" for the unfamiliar "Laish."

Gen. 36:31 speaks of a time "before there reigned any king over the children of Israel," implying that the time had come when kings were reigning, which would take us into the times of the monarchy. But it is possible to believe that the contrast was between the Israelites without kings and their neighbors with kings, or that this, too, may have been a later interpolation.

It is asserted that the various legal codes in the Pentateuch reflect a time when the Israelites were settled in Canaan rather than living as nomads. That is certainly true, but that does not make the Mosaic authorship impossible. The Israelites had come from a settled life in Egypt and were looking forward to being settled again in the promised land. Even an uninspired leader would be able to anticipate the problems that they would have to face in their new life.

Two main names for God are used in the Pentateuch, those translated God and the LORD in our King James Version and God and Jehovah in the American Revised Version (*Elohim* and *Yahweh*[1] in the Hebrew). That gave rise to theories that at least two different sources were used, one of which called God "Jehovah" and another "God." Exod. 6:3 says that God had not been known to the patriarchs as Jehovah; it is asserted that this proves that one source believed that the name Jehovah was first revealed to Moses, while another source had been using it all the way through Genesis. These different names for Deity became the key for dividing the Pentateuch into different sources. We must recognize, however, that this is by no means the only distinction between the sources as they are presented by modern scholars.

Scholars who deny the source theories declare that the same person may use the two names interchangeably, as we frequently do, or that he may have meant to make some distinction between the two; *Elohim* is a general word for Deity, while "Jehovah" is the personal name of the God recognized by the Israelites. They also call

(1) The later Jews came to have a superstitious reverence for this name and would not even pronounce it when they came to it in the text. They would substitute *Adonai*, meaning "Lord," for it. They would not dare to change the consonantal text, but they did write in the vowels of *Adonai* with the consonants of *Yahweh*, giving rise to the hybrid word "Jehovah." Today we cannot know what the original vowels were, but *Yahweh* is as good a guess as we can make, though other spellings are often used. We shall use the more common form Jehovah, and the student can see its use in the American Revision.

attention to the fact that in many places the Greek Old Testament does not follow the usage of the Hebrew in regard to the divine names; we must all admit that there are times when we cannot tell whether the original text is preserved in our Hebrew manuscripts or in the Septuagint. Likewise there are quite a few places where "Jehovah" is used in the midst of many uses of *Elohim*, and at times the two names are used together; those who hold to the source theory must believe that their sources were tampered with considerably by later redactors to explain such facts as these.

There are places in the Pentateuch where we seem to have two or even more accounts of the same event. At times these occur in two different contexts; at times they are woven together into one account. For example, we have the Ten Commandments in Exod. 20 and also in Deut. 5. We have two stories of Abraham's difficulties with his wife, and still another similar story for Isaac. There seem to be two stories of the creation in Gen. 1 and 2. Many see two stories of the Flood woven together with differences in detail still showing through, such as the length of the Flood and the number of animals to be taken into the ark. Three explanations for the name Isaac are recorded in Gen. 17:17; 18:12; and 21:6. Some see two interwoven stories in the story of the selling of Joseph into Egypt, one emphasizing the friendship of Judah and the other, Reuben, one calling his buyers "Midianites" and the other "Ishmaelites." And there are others somewhat similar. These different accounts are thought to have come from different sources. It is quite impressive to see how it is possible to construct two or more rather complete stories out of these complex passages. We should say, however, that some of the work in this field seems very artificial and unreasonable. Some scholars have seen divergences when it is just as easy, or even easier, to see perfect

harmony. Some seem to have forgotten the Hebrew fondness for repetition even outside of the parallelism of poetry. Some see a double account of the same event where it is just as reasonable to suppose that two similar events actually occurred. Yet when all allowances for these extremes are made there is still enough left to warrant serious consideration.

Probably the most important consideration of the documentary theorists is the belief that the Pentateuch shows signs of the presence of varying interests which developed over a period of years. When these interests are compared with books and events which can be definitely dated, it is believed that at least some of them must have developed long after the time of Moses. For example, at first there seemed to be no restriction upon the place where God could be worshiped, but later it was insisted that the worship be centralized at Jerusalem. For a long time we can detect an emphasis on morality as proclaimed by the earlier prophets. After the exile we can detect a great emphasis on the ritualistic side of religion as presented by the priests.

On the basis of these and similar considerations, the theory has been worked out that there was a gradual development of religious ideas. The more complex the thoughts expressed, the later they were supposed to have developed. Particularly, the more priestly interests we find, the later were these parts in developing.

There is much weight in this point. We can certainly see a much greater emphasis on priestly affairs in the post-Exilic literature than in the earlier literature; it is easy to see this when we compare the late books of Chronicles with the earlier historical accounts in Samuel and Kings, for example.

There are many, however, who feel that the present-day theory of development is an oversimplification of

the factors involved. It is quite possible to believe that priestly emphases were in existence as early as the time of Moses and that the earlier prophets emphasized morality more than ritualism because they considered the former far more important than the latter; at times one would be emphasized and at times the other. We today have all the ritualistic books of the Old Testament and many modern rituals, but certainly the vast majority of Christians would place far more emphasis on the deeper matters of spirituality.

Then it should be recognized that the advocates of the developmental theory must make considerable use of interpolation theories to make their theory work smoothly. Priestly elements are found in books that come too early to work into the theory; so it must be assumed that they were later additions made by redactors with priestly interests. This is, of course, a process of reasoning in a circle, and if it has to be used too much it will vitiate the theory that is based upon it. Some Conservatives hold to a theory of inspiration so mechanical that they cannot admit the possibility of any interpolation theory. It would greatly simplify matters if we could believe that the various books of the Old Testament have come down to us in exactly the form they had when they left the hands of their original authors, but, unfortunately, we cannot be sure that they did. The Pentateuch as it is preserved in the Massoretic Hebrew text is not just the same as the Pentateuch of the Samaritans. Some books were still in a rather fluid condition at least as late as the third century B. C. as we see when we compare the way they are preserved in the Greek Old Testament with the way we have them in the Massoretic Hebrew. These things may be considered primarily matters of textual criticism, but they must also be considered in dealing with historical criticism.

At first there was the widest divergence in the developmental theories, and so their opponents could safely afford to reject them all; but that is not the case today. The theories of the various scholars became more and more similar as the field was more thoroughly worked. In the latter part of the nineteenth century, Graf and Wellhausen presented their theoretical reconstructions in a form that has been accepted in all essentials by the vast majority of critical scholars since their day, though, of course, in details there is still wide divergence.(1) Let us make a brief survey of that Graf-Wellhausen theory.

Four major sources are posited, known by the symbols "J," "E," "D," and "P." Some believe that these four sources came from four different individuals, though probably the majority of scholars today believe that each source is the product of a group of persons with similar interests, of a school of thought rather than any one definite individual. Some scholars believe that they can further break down the sources and identify the work of individuals or smaller schools within the larger school, using such symbols as J^1, J^2, J^3, and so on; other scholars admit the possibility that the major sources are not completely homogeneous, but they feel that it is useless to attempt to carry the analysis beyond the major sources.

"J" is the symbol given to that source which uses the name of Jehovah from the start. It has a definite prophetic, rather than priestly, emphasis. The stories of "J" are told very graphically. God is frequently referred to in anthropomorphic terms. Much more interest seems to be taken in places and events connected with the Southern Kingdom; so many feel that "J" came from Judah.

(1) Cornill gives a good survey of the history of this criticism in his *Introduction to the Canonical Books of the O. T.*, pp. 3ff.

"E" is used for the prophetic source which used the name *Elohim* for God before God revealed His name Jehovah to Moses in Exod. 3:15. "E" is not quite so pictorial in his descriptions as "J." "E" avoids anthropomorphic conceptions of God; God communicates with men through visions and angels rather than directly. "E" seems to be more worried when he records the sins of his characters and tries to find some excuse for them; his ethical standards seem to have been somewhat higher than J's. E seems to have come from the Northern Kingdom, or Ephraim, as J, from the Southern.

As J and E were both sources with the prophetic emphasis they have much in common, and especially after Exod. 3:15 it becomes rather difficult to distinguish one from the other.

"D" is the deuteronomic source. It is characterized by an exalted spiritual conception of God. This holy God expects His people to be holy; He rewards them when they are and punishes them when they are not. The true worship of God is to be centralized in one sanctuary. Certain characteristic phrases are frequently found; e.g., "other gods," "that thy days may be long," "which I command thee this day," "that it may be well with thee" and "with all thy heart and with all thy soul."

"P" is the priestly source. It has a very marked, formal style. It frequently repeats set phrases. There is nothing of the vivid, pictorial style of the prophetic sources. There is a great interest in matters of genealogy and chronology. Ritualistic interests are very prominent. "P," like "E," used the name *Elohim* for God before Exod. 6:3. There are no anthropomorphisms in P, nor even any angels or visions; God simply speaks and His will is immediately done. There is a great interest in the origin of religious institutions and cus-

toms. God's covenant relationship to His people is emphasized.

Where are these sources found in the Pentateuch? A full analysis would go far beyond the bounds of this volume; the advanced student should refer to Driver[1] for a rather conservative analysis or to Cornill[2] for a much more advanced one. D is found almost exclusively in Deuteronomy, though signs of a deuteronomic revision are found throughout the Pentateuch. "E" starts at Gen. 20 and is then found throughout the rest of the Pentateuch. "J" and "P" can be recognized all through the Pentateuch.

When did these major sources come into existence? This is a highly technical point that we cannot hope to cover completely. There is some divergence in the datings as given by various scholars, but not very much. It is almost universally agreed that the sources arose in the order J, E, D and P. J and E came from about the same period, though the development of thought and morality of E seems to be somewhat higher and therefore later. J and E seem to have been in use by the times of Amos and Hosea but seem to have been later than the time of the division of the kingdom. Most scholars would place the two sources at least between the limits of 900 and 750 B. C. Most scholars connect D with the time of the revival which took place in the eighteenth year of Josiah (621 B. C.) when the book of the law was discovered in the temple, as recorded in II Kings 22:3ff. The reforms recorded deal with just the matters contained in D. Deuteronomy purports to be the final words of Moses, reviewing briefly God's care for His chosen people and emphasizing the more important laws God expected them to follow. Some scholars believe that D was written not long before 621,

(1) *Introduction to the Literature of the O. T.*
(2) *Introduction to the Canonical Books of the O. T.*

and that the words were put into the mouth of Moses because the men of that day felt that they were simply applying the principles of the Mosaic legislation to the needs of their day; they may have been words that Moses actually spoke, but at least they were true to the spirit of what he spoke. P is usually dated in Exilic or post-Exilic times; we see the reflections of it in Ezekiel, Ezra and Nehemiah; some time around 500 B. C. would not be far wrong.

How did these four major sources come together to make our present Pentateuch? Again we see some divergence in the details but a large measure of agreement as to the major steps in the process. The two prophetic sources, J and E, were combined into one document, JE, probably not long after they originated independently. The person or group that made the combination is referred to by the symbol R^{JE} (the JE redactor). Probably soon after 621, D was worked into the combined JE by the deuteronomic redactor, R^{D}, who not only put D in its proper place but also made notes of a deuteronomistic nature from place to place in JE. Finally the priestly redactor, R^{P}, worked in the source P into the combined JED, probably not long after the time of the origin of P. We cannot go too far beyond this time, because the Samaritan Pentateuch and the Pentateuch in the Greek Old Testament contain all these sources combined, though they are not identical with the Pentateuch of the Massoretic text. Some scholars, like Cornill, believe that it is possible to identify several different stages in each of the processes of redaction, though we can hardly expect much agreement about such detailed analysis.

In addition to the four major sources, many scholars believe that smaller sources can be identified, such as "The Holiness Code" (H, Lev. 17-26), "The Book of

the Covenant" (Exod. 21-23) and certain poems, which were worked into the Pentateuch at various stages of the redactions.

Some Evaluations of the Theories

It goes without saying that the theory of Mosaic authorship is by far the simpler of the two, but that fact does not necessarily make it the true one. We know something about the complicated process back of the production of any modern book of history. Even if Moses wrote the whole Pentateuch, we must suppose that he used sources, oral and written probably, for much of the material, unless we hold to some mechanical dictation theory of inspiration. In the composition of Matthew and Luke it is generally agreed in most Conservative circles that the writers of both of those Gospels made free use of the Gospel of Mark and a "sayings source" (Q) and probably other oral and written sources. The books of Samuel, Kings and Chronicles make frequent references to various sources of information. God can use supernatural means in the production of His Word, but it seems clear that He used natural means when such were available.

It should be recognized that many scholars who hold to the source theory favor it with its late datings because they do not believe that the Pentateuch presents a true history of these early times. If the history is not considered true, the historian should try to date his sources as far from the events they aim to record as possible. Some of the more Radical scholars cast doubt upon the historicity of virtually everything in the Pentateuch. It should also be recognized, however, that such a destructive view of the historicity of the events recorded in the Pentateuch is not inherent in the documentary hypothesis itself. It is quite possible to believe that, although the final form of the Pentateuch is late and

the major sources are comparatively late, the information itself is trustworthy. Oral tradition can preserve outstanding events at least rather accurately. But in recent years archaeology has proved that writing was also available at least as early as Abraham; so those who believe in sources may well believe that they contain material based upon written documents from very early times. Probably no scholar who believes in the documentary hypothesis believes in minute historical inerrancy, but many of them have a very high respect for the general historical trustworthiness of the material. The Conservative should recognize clearly that the Bible is far more a book of religion than a book of history; some fundamental doctrines of our faith are entirely dependent upon the historicity of certain events; in other places it makes no difference whatever to our faith as to whether a certain thing did or did not occur. Our theory of inspiration should come from a fair handling of all the factors involved. There are certainly minor contradictions between parts of the Bible, at least in the best texts that are available to us now. There are some contradictions between biblical statements and statements taken from ancient historians; the ancient historians may have always been in error, though it is possible that the Bible may have erred from time to time. Conservatives should recognize clearly that errors in matters of historical detail do not imply errors in matters of faith and practice or invalidate a firm belief in plenary inspiration of Scripture. There are events that go back beyond all of our historical checks, and so we can never hope to be able to prove whether they are true or false. At times historical truth is of utmost importance, and at such times we Conservatives believe that God's supervision saw to it that the truth was preserved. We should recognize that our Master Himself taught some of His finest lessons through parables.

Figures of speech of all kinds are used in Scripture, and there would be nothing wrong *per se* in believing that there may be something other than scientific, historic fact in the Pentateuch.

Those who hold to the documentary hypothesis must recognize that at least certain forms of their theory make some or all of the Pentateuch a kind of pious fraud. They have late authors inventing speeches and laws and placing them in Moses' mouth to gain the authority and prestige of his name. This is a most serious objection to a real Conservative. It must be admitted, however, that ancient standards were not always the same as ours. We know that certain pseudonymous books were produced in antiquity, though they were normally excluded from the canon. Luther, however, was convinced that Solomon was not the author of Ecclesiastes, and Calvin was not sure that Peter wrote II Peter; the great reformers did not consider pseudonymity and inspiration necessarily mutually exclusive.

On either theory of origin, it is necessary to recognize the progressiveness of God's revelation. God leads His people onward as they are able to follow. Truths are brought to light in the later books of the Old Testament that were never mentioned in the earlier books, and the revelation is carried to still higher stages in the New Testament. On the Mosaic authorship theory we can see progress from the time of creation to the time of Moses; on the documentary theory, we may be able to see progress in the Pentateuch down to post-Exilic times. The two theories may differ widely at times as to the dating of the appearance of a certain truth, but both theories should deal with an attempt to reconstruct the history of God's progressive dealings with His chosen people.

The Mosaic authorship theory has the prestige of a long tradition behind it, a tradition that was unanimous from probably pre-Christian times to very recent days, while the documentary hypothesis can claim the adherence of the vast majority of present-day Old Testament critical scholars. Each side has evidence for it and against it. Each scholar should weigh the evidence for himself and follow it wherever it may lead.

Years ago Dr. Driver warmly defended the Graf-Wellhausen theory and insisted that it was in thorough accord with a high theory of the inspiration of Scripture. Virtually all Conservatives, however, disagreed with him and contended that the theory destroyed entirely too much to leave room for any real theory of inspiration. There are still many who believe that the theory is out of harmony with Conservatism.

Other Conservatives, however, prefer to be less certain of their denial of the possible truth of the theory. Conditions have changed considerably since the time of Driver and his early opponents. Since archaeology has given us much light on the times of Moses and even Abraham, it is not necessary to draw such radical inferences from the documentary hypothesis. One can believe that the Pentateuch went through some such literary development and at the same time believe in a very high degree of historical accuracy and a very high theory of inspiration; some Conservatives favor that position, and do not believe that it makes the Pentateuch anything of a pious fraud.

The developmental theory has been made considerably less dangerous by the discoveries of archaeology, though some of its proponents still have a very low view of the historicity of the Pentateuch and the value of its religious ideas. On the other hand, archaeology

has also removed some of the most important objections to the theory of Mosaic authorship.

Some Conservatives believe that the vast majority of the Pentateuch can be considered Mosaic but that there are some rather minor interpolations in it. They believe that Moses may be considered the author of the books in the sense that he was the responsible guarantor of the contents of the books; he himself may have given the books much of their present form, or they may have been shaped up by some editor shortly after his time. Moses may well have made use of sources, both written and oral. They do not believe, however, that the facts warrant a belief in anything like the Graf-Wellhausen theory.

Some have made a belief in the complete Mosaic authorship an essential of orthodoxy. Some have made an acceptance of the development theory an essential of intellectual respectibility. Both of these positions are too extreme.

Every Conservative student should have a fair understanding of the source theory and of the evidence for and against it. Then some may feel that it is their duty to oppose it. Most Conservatives will probably continue to favor some intelligent form of the Mosaic authorship theory. All of them will continue to defend the historical accuracy of the Pentateuch as much as possible and to believe in it as an integral part of God's inspired rule of faith and practice. Some Conservatives believe that the facts favor the acceptance of a mild form of the developmental theory. Others will prefer to refuse to commit themselves, believing that in time more light will be available.

Someone may ask, "What difference does all this make?" That is a reasonable question, but the answer to it must be different for different classes of persons.

There are scholars who are interested in discovering as much of the truth as possible whether it has any practical importance or not. We are glad that there are such scholars at work on all sections of the Bible, as technical scholarship has always led us to a truer appreciation of God's Word — though at times we must get over the shock of the new truth before we can appreciate it. These technical scholars consider these theories of great importance from many angles, and they will continue to work in the field and certainly should do so.

Probably the average Christian knows little and cares less about such matters. And we cannot say that that is wrong. God can reveal Himself through an unknown author as well as through one that is known, and in the fifth century B. C. as well as the fifteenth.

Some persons have a little knowledge, frequently mingled with much that is not true, about such matters, and that little knowledge becomes a dangerous thing to them. They may have been taught that the documentary hypothesis will destroy the Bible. They may rest assured that God's Word has survived for many centuries now, and we have every reason to believe that no truth will ever be discovered that will make it obsolete. If the source theory should ever be proved conclusively to be true, we should freely recognize it as a fact and make whatever adaptations may be necessary in our beliefs. If it is not believed to be true and a person wishes to attack it, he should understand it thoroughly enough to make an intelligent attack. Each reader of this volume probably has some interest in this problem; he should decide in the light of his own

interests and needs how much further he should pursue the matter.[1]

Genesis

The name Genesis comes from the Greek word, *genesis*, becoming or beginning, which was the title of the book in the Septuagint. The Jews called the book *Breshith* (in the beginning), from the first word in the Hebrew text. The name is a good indication of the purpose of the book, which was to trace the beginnings of history. It is, however, the religious and moral history that is of primary importance. God created the world and its inhabitants for His own glory. Sin came in to thwart His purposes temporarily. Then God begins to work to overcome sin. We follow His dealings as we see Him choose Noah and his family, and then Abraham, Isaac and Jacob and the patriarchs. The book of Genesis takes us down from the creation of the world to the death of Joseph with a magnificent sweep.

The contents of the book may be outlined briefly as follows:

1. *The Creation*, 1:1 — 2:25.
2. *From the Fall to the Flood*, 3:1 — 5:32.
3. *The Flood*, 6:1 — 9:29.
4. *From the Flood to Abraham*, 10:1 — 11:26.
5. *Abraham*, 11:27 — 25:10.
6. *Isaac*, 25:11 — 28:9.
7. *Jacob*, 28:10 — 36:43.
8. *The Patriarchs, especially Joseph*, 37:1 — 50:26.

(1) There is an abundant literature available in English. The following are some of the better books defending the Mosaic authorship theory: *Old Testament Introduction*, J. H. Raven, Revell, 1910; *The Higher Criticism of the Pentateuch*, W. H Green, Scribners, 1895; *The Problem of the O. T.*, James Orr, Scribners, 1906; and *Reasonable Biblical Criticism*, W. J. Beecher, Harpers, 1911. On the other side may be mentioned: *Introduction to the Literature of the O. T.*, S. R. Driver, Scribners, 1897 (and many later printings); *Introduction to the Canonical Books of the O. T.*, Carl Cornill (Eng. trans. by Box), Putnam's 1907; *An Introduction to the O. T.*, Harlan Creelman, Macmillan, 1917; *The O. T., Its Making and Meaning*, H. W. Robinson, Cokesbury, 1937; *The Literature of the O. T.*, J. A. Bewer, Columbia U. Press, 1922; *Introduction to the O. T.*, R. H. Pfeiffer, Harpers, 1941; and *An Introduction to the Books of the O. T.*, W. O. E. Oesterley and T. H. Robinson, Macmillan, 1934.

From time to time long genealogies are found in the book. The average person finds very little of value in these portions, though persons with the priestly interest in such matters evidently considered them important. We must be careful about placing too much weight upon these genealogies in attempting to construct a chronology of Genesis. Chronologies were often presented incompletely, emphasizing the more important generations and omitting others entirely; it is necessary to recognize this to bring anything like harmony within the Bible itself, to say nothing of harmonizing the biblical chronology with that of other ancient historical documents. Then even the most conservative scholars admit that they are not quite certain as to what should be done with the tremendous ages of the pre-Abrahamic men (or tribes). Likewise the figures of the Hebrew text are often quite different from those of the Septuagint. Back of Abraham especially we must take the dates found at the top of the page in many editions of the Bible (those worked out by Archbishop Ussher) with several grains of salt.

It is possible to point to Babylonian parallels to the stories of Creation and of the Flood. Some say that that proves that the biblical accounts were simply legends like those, or were even derived from those. No one can ascertain the origin of these primitive records in the Bible. Some feel that they may have come from a special revelation from God, while others feel that they may contain much legendary matter. Even if the latter be true, the striking thing is the way the Bible used them to teach such wonderful religious truths. Let us emphasize the fact again that God does reveal Himself through history, but He does not limit Himself to just that one sphere of revelation. The Conservative may study as much as he wants in the

fields of comparative religion and archaeology, not fearing to face any facts that may be discovered.

From the time of Abraham on, archaeology is beginning to throw quite a flood of light on the events recorded in the Bible and on the history and customs of the surrounding peoples. We welcome all the light we can get that will help us see the biblical characters really live and move in their own times.

We should recognize the trend of the movement of God's dealings with mankind as brought out in Genesis. First God dealt graciously with all mankind, but with the entrance of sin He began to choose some and pass by others. At the time of Noah, he and his family were chosen, and the rest of mankind were rejected. Then Abraham was chosen from all that were alive at his time. Then Isaac, but not Ishmael. Then Jacob, but not Esau. And the book of Genesis leaves us with God dealing in a very special way with the sons of Jacob, the children of Israel. And that is the emphasis that goes on down into the Old Testament, even into the New. We believe that from the very beginning God chose to deal with small groups of people who would receive and treasure His revelation in order that He might prepare them to go forth and spread that revelation throughout the world — a process that is still going on.

SUPPLEMENTARY NOTE: According to the documentary hypothesis, there are signs of all four major sources in Genesis. The main framework seems to have been supplied by P. Much of the narrative portion comes from J(1), and, after chapter 20, from E. The D interest is present only in redactional additions from time to time. (1) Pfeiffer, *op. cit.*, Chap. III, suggests that J in Genesis be divided, and that its material in Chapters 1-11 and in a few other places be assigned to a source which he designates as S. As yet this step has not been generally adopted.

Exodus

This book received its name from the title in the Septuagint, *exodus*, which means departure. The Jews named it from the first two words in the Hebrew, which mean, "And these are the names."

Exodus takes up the story where Genesis left off, at the death of Joseph, and carries it on to the establishment of the theocracy at Mount Sinai. The contents may be briefly outlined as follows:

1. *History from Joseph to Mount Sinai,* 1:1 - 19:2.
   a. The oppression by the Egyptians, 1.
   b. Moses prepared for his work, 2-4.
   c. Moses and Pharaoh, the plagues, 5-11.
   d. The Passover instituted, 12:1 - 13:16.
   e. The journey from Egypt to Sinai, 13:17 - 19:2.
2. *Israel at Mount Sinai,* 19:3 - 40:38.
   a. The Covenant given and ratified, 19:3-24:11.
   b. Moses on Sinai, instructions for the tabernacle, 24:12 - 31:18.
   c. The golden calf, 32 - 33.
   d. Moses' second sojourn on Mount Sinai, 34.
   e. The construction of the tabernacle, 35 - 40.

The question of the dating of the Exodus is a very interesting and complicated one. In I Kings 6:1 we are told that Solomon began the building of the temple in the fourth year of his reign, 480 years after the Exodus from Egypt; this would give about 1495 B. C. as the time of the Exodus. Exodus 12:40 tells us that they stayed in Egypt 430 years; so the time of the sojourn would be from about 1925 to 1495 B. C.

When we try to harmonize the biblical chronology with that given to us by archaeology from Egyptian and Babylonian sources, we find some difficulties in making them fit exactly. Kenyon emphasizes the Habiru of the Tell el-Armana letters and recent discoveries tending to date the fall of Jericho about 1400 B. C. and

thus arrives at about 1440 as the date of the Exodus.[1] Albright emphasizes Egyptian similarities and a recently discovered hieratic inscription and concludes that 1290 B. C. cannot be far wrong for the date of the Exodus.[2] Thus two of the most recent books in the field of archaeology reflect the fact that there is still doubt among the archaeologists. We should recognize the possibility of the biblical datings having some round numbers and approximations in them also. All that we can say at present is that all the indications point to the same general period; an exact dating is not obtainable as yet. When we go back to the beginning of the stay in Egypt and get back toward Abraham, we run into the time of Hammurabi; competent archaeologists vary in dating him between the eighteenth and twenty-second centuries B. C.; so again there is general agreement without the possibility of exactness as yet.

Radical criticism cast doubt for a time upon the historicity of the sojourn in Egypt and the Exodus. But archaeologists have told us so much about conditions in Egypt and Palestine that the hypercritics have no longer any reasons for their sweeping doubts and denials. We cannot, of course, hope to get proof for all the details of the Scriptural account, but Albright assures us that recent archaeology has given us much evidence for the substantial historicity of the account of the Exodus.[3]

Leviticus

The name Leviticus comes to us by way of the Septuagint from the subject matter of the book, the

(1) *The Bible and Archaeology*, pp. 74, 189

(2) *From the Stone Age to Christianity*, pp. 194f.

(3) *Op. cit.*, p. 194.

SUPPLEMENTARY NOTE: According to the documentary hypothesis, the structure of Exodus is much the same as that of Genesis. The framework and much of the legalistic material comes from P. The narrative comes mostly from J and E, and it is very hard to distinguish between the two at times. There are slight signs of a deuteronomic redaction.

book of the Levites. The Jews got their name for it from the opening word of the Hebrew, which means "And he called."

Leviticus is definitely a law book for the priests of Israel. There is practically no narrative in it; what little there is is simply an illustration of the violation or keeping of one of the laws given. There are constant refrains throughout the book: "The Lord spake unto Moses, saying . . . " and "This is the law of . . . " At times God is pictured as speaking to Moses in the tent of meeting, and at times on Mount Sinai.

The theory of Mosaic authorship holds that all of these laws came to Moses and were recorded by him at the time or soon thereafter. The documentary hypothesis admits the possibility of Mosaic portions, but it believes that the book as it now stands comes from the priestly scholars at a much later date. The words are put into the mouth of Moses with no attempt to defraud. Moses was considered the lawgiver par excellence, and so the priestly writers did not hesitate to ascribe new laws to Moses so long as they felt that they were in keeping with the spirit of Moses and the laws they did have from Moses.

Even if we be led to accept some form of the documentary hypothesis and believe that these priestly laws originated rather late in the religious development of Israel, it is interesting to notice that the ritualistic side of religion also sank into insignificance soonest. God used all these ceremonials and sacrifices for a time in training His people, but the Epistle to the Hebrews in the New Testament shows us that since the Perfect Sacrifice has come, the time for all of the priestly ritual has gone.

We may summarize the laws of Leviticus as follows:

1. *Laws of sacrifice, purification and atonement,* 1 - 16.
   a. Laws of sacrifice, 1 - 7.
   b. The consecration of the priests, 8 - 9.
   c. The punishment of Nadab and Abihu, 10.
   d. Laws of purification, 11 - 15.
   e. The day of atonement, 16.
2. *The book of holiness,* 17 - 27.
   a. Laws for priests and people, 17 - 22.
   b. A calendar of feasts and seasons, 23 - 25.
   c. Miscellaneous laws, 26 - 27.

SUPPLEMENTARY NOTE: According to the documentary hypothesis, only one of the major sources is found in Leviticus: "P." However, most scholars feel that the chapters 17-27 are distinct enough from "P" to justify their being considered a separate minor source, usually called "H" (holiness). "P" or a priestly redactor introduced some elements into "H" from "P" and combined the two to form our book.

Numbers

We get our name for this book from a translation of the title in the Septuagint. The Jews called the book by the first word of the Hebrew text (meaning, "and he spoke") or, more commonly, from the fifth word (meaning, "in the wilderness").

Numbers takes up the narrative where Exodus left off, at Mount Sinai, and carries it forward to the verge of Israel's entrance into the promised land, "in the plains of Moab by Jordan near Jericho." It begins in the second year of the Exodus (1:1) and goes to the fortieth year (33:38). Although it covers the history of thirty-eight years it tells very little about any of the time except the beginning and end of the period.

The contents of the book may be outlined thus:

1. *Preparations for leaving Mount Sinai,* 1:1-10:10.
   a. The numbering and arrangement of the tribes, 1 - 2.
   b. The duties of the priests and Levites, 3 - 4.
   c. Laws on various subjects of ritual, 5:1-9:14.
   d. The guiding pillar of fire and cloud, 9:15 - 10:10.

2. *The journey from Sinai to the plains of Moab,* 10:11 - 22:1.
   a. The departure from Sinai, 10:11 - 36.
   Murmurings of the people, 11 - 12.
   c. The story of the spies, 13 - 14.
   d. Laws concerning offerings, 15.
   e. The rebellion of Korah and others, 16 - 17.
   f. Laws concerning the priests and Levites, 18.
   g. The rites of purification, 19.
   h. From Kadesh-Barnea to the plains of Moab, 20:1 - 22:1.

3. *Israel in the plains of Moab,* 22:2 - 36:13.
   a. The history of Balaam, 22:2 - 24:25.
   b. Israel's sin at Shittim, 25.
   c. The second census of Israel, 26.
   d. The inheritance of daughters, 27:1 - 11.
   e. Moses' death and successor foretold, 27: 12-23.
   f. A calendar of sacrifices, 28 - 29.
   g. The law of vows, 30.
   h. War against the Midianites, 31.
   i. Allotment of the trans-Jordanic region, 32.
   j. Review of the wilderness journeys, 33.
   k. Directions for the division of Canaan, 34-36.

SUPPLEMENTARY NOTE: According to the documentary hypothesis, Numbers was composed primarily from "P" and "JE." Most of the first ten chapters came from "P." along with the various laws scattered throughout the book. Most of the narrative came from "JE," though some of the stories seem to have been a conflation from "JE" and "P." It is usually considered very difficult to distinguish between "J" and "E," though the distinction between the prophetic "JE" and the priestly "P" is marked.

Deuteronomy

The Jews called this book by the first two words of the Hebrew text (sometimes by just the second), which mean "these are the words." Deuteronomy comes from the title of the book in the Septuagint; it is a compound Greek word meaning "the second law."

The book is made up primarily of the closing addresses of Moses, just before his death and before the people were to enter the promised land. The last section actually records the death of Moses.

The contents of the book may be outlined thus:

1. *Moses' first address*, 1 - 4. A brief review of the history of God's dealings with His people from Sinai (which Deuteronomy calls Horeb) to Moab.

2. *Moses' second address*, 5 - 26. A summary of the laws for the chosen people, beginning with the Ten Commandments.

3. *Moses' third address*, 27 - 28. God will bless those who keep His law and punish those who violate it.

4. *Conclusion*, 29 - 34. The covenant is established. Joshua is appointed as Moses' successor. The law is delivered to the priests. Moses sings a psalm of praise and then blesses the people. Moses sees the promised land but is not allowed to enter it. Moses dies on Mount Pisgah at the age of 120.

The book of Deuteronomy repeats much of the material that is found elsewhere in the Pentateuch. At times there are rather significant differences; for example, Deuteronomy emphasizes the one central sanctuary as the proper place for true worship; it uses Horeb instead of Sinai; it seems to make no distinction between priests and Levites; it has different commands about the tithes. Some scholars still think that these differences can best be handled on the basis of the Mosaic

authorship of the whole Pentateuch; we are now at the end of the wilderness wanderings, anticipating a settled existence in Canaan. Others are convinced that the differences are so great as to make impossible a belief in the unity of authorship of the Pentateuch. The student may make a fuller study of this great question with the help of a good critical commentary on Deuteronomy.

On the documentary hypothesis of the Pentateuch, Deuteronomy is made up primarily from the major source D. Some scholars think that our present book is rather close to the original D, while others believe that D has gone through a series of redactions. Some of the narrative may have come from the JE school. Some elements of a more ecclesiastical nature may have come from P. The song and blessing of chapters 32 and 33 may have come from independent sources.

Let us remember that the book of Deuteronomy occupies a most strategic place in the documentary hypothesis. It is that book, or a good part of it, that was supposed to have been discovered in the temple and that became the basis for the revival under King Josiah in 621 B. C., as recorded in II Kings 22 and 23. Every reform mentioned in the account in Kings can be traced back to some provisions in Deuteronomy. It is quite generally recognized that Deuteronomy or an earlier form of D must have been in existence by the time of this revival; its influence is also clearly seen in the writings of the prophets that can be dated after this time, though little or no influence can be seen in the earlier prophets.

There is a distinctive literary style that can be recognized in Deuteronomy. Favorite expressions occur again and again here that are not found elsewhere; Driver lists forty-one of them in his *Introduction.*[1]

(1) Pp. 99ff.

If Deuteronomy (or D) was composed shortly before 621 for the purpose of producing the revival, were the authors not dishonest in putting their ideas into the mouth of Moses in an attempt to claim his authority for them? We should probably think of that kind of thing as a fraud today, now that we are so aware of copyrights, quotation marks, footnotes and other such modern inventions. The proponents of the documentary hypothesis insist that there was not the slightest intention of fraud or deceit in the minds of the producers of D. The words were put into the mouth of Moses because he was considered the lawgiver par excellence. The producers may have actually had some Mosaic laws which they arranged in a striking literary frame and made applicable to the needs of the new conditions. This problem constitutes a real difficulty, but by no means an insuperable one, even for a Conservative.

Whoever the author of Deuteronomy was and whenever it might have been written, the book is full of the very highest type of moral precepts. It occupies a most prominent part in God's revelation of His will for His chosen people, of the new as well as of the old dispensation. Our Lord frequently made use of it; all three of His answers to Satan at the time of the temptation were taken from this great book.

V.

THE BOOK OF JOSHUA

The book of Joshua received its name in the Hebrew and all the versions from the principal character of the book. The word is spelled in several ways in the Hebrew; its meaning is "Jehovah is salvation." The Greek spelling of the word is *Iesous*. Jesus and Joshua are the same name; in some respects it is to be regretted that the standard English translations used one form in the Old Testament and the other in the New, though that usage does save the word Jesus for the unique person of the Christ.

Many scholars use the term "Hexateuch" instead of "Pentateuch," thus including Joshua in the literary unit. If the Hexateuch is the unit, then the composition is pushed down beyond the time of Moses and the theory of Mosaic authorship is made impossible. Even on the basis of the documentary hypothesis, however, it is by no means necessary to use the term Hexateuch. Most scholars of that school do not stop the hypothesis with the book of Joshua but go on through Judges, Samuel and Kings. If the Hexateuch were ever the literary unit, it is clear that at a very early time Joshua was separated from it and the Pentateuch became the unit.

In the Jewish canon Joshua brings us to the second great division. The Pentateuch constituted the law; now we enter the prophets. This second division of the canon was further divided into two sections, the former and the latter prophets. Each of these smaller divisions had four books in it. The former prophets contained Joshua, Judges, Samuel and Kings, each of the latter two books being considered a unit in the old Hebrew

classification. The latter prophets contained Isaiah, Jeremiah, Ezekiel and the Twelve, our twelve minor prophets. The former prophets continue the history of Israel from the Pentateuch to the Babylonian exile.

The question of the authorship of the book of Joshua is one that it is impossible to determine. The fact that the title of the book is Joshua is not the slightest evidence that Joshua was considered the author; many books received their names from their chief characters rather than from their authors.

Joshua 24:26 says, "And Joshua wrote these words in the book of the law of God." This statement gave rise to the tradition found in the Jewish Talmud and in some Christian writings that Joshua himself was the author. But it is by no means certain that the statement "these words" was meant to refer to the contents of our whole book; it is probable that they were not. On the contrary, Joshua is always spoken of in the third person in the book, which suggests rather strongly that he was not the author. Then the death of Joshua is recorded; if he wrote the book we must suppose that the end of it was added later or that he predicted his death and wrote an account of it as history.

Joshua 10:13 refers to the Book of Jashar in connection with the story of the sun standing still. II Samuel 1:18 refers to the same book in the time of David. Some see here a proof that Joshua could not have been written until at least the time of David, as it referred to a book that must have been written late enough to contain an account of something that happened in the time of David. There is force in that argument, though it must be admitted that all too little is known about that Book of Jashar. It may have been a collection of poems about the heroes which may have been expanded from time to time to include the more recent heroes. Or it is pos-

sible to think that the reference to it in Joshua may have been an interpolation added at a later time.

Joshua 15:63 says, "But the Jebusites dwell with the children of Judah at Jerusalem unto this day." Joshua 16:10 says likewise: "But the Canaanites dwell among the Ephraimites unto this day, and serve under tribute." Both of those verses seem to indicate that some time had taken place between the events recorded and the time of writing. At the same time they indicate that the book, or the sources from which the statements were taken, must not be placed too late; the Jebusites were still in Jerusalem and the Canaanites in Ephraim, and that condition probably did not last very long in the time of the monarchy.(1) Joshua 6:25 seems to indicate that the book was written before the death of Rahab, though it may be that one of the sources of the book was written by that time or that the reference was to the descendants of Rahab. No one of these references can be considered conclusive evidence as to the writing of the book as a whole, though they suggest rather strongly that the book was not written by Joshua or any of his contemporaries.

Scholars who believe in the documentary hypothesis of the Pentateuch believe that the same sources can be clearly seen in Joshua. We should give up, therefore, our search for any one author of the book and consider it the product of a number of men over a considerable period of time. The reasoning in favor of the position here is the same as that for the Pentateuch, and so we shall not go into it further. Scholars who do not believe in the source theories point out certain minor differences in style between Joshua and the Pentateuch.(2) The pro-

(1) Raven, *Old Testament Introduction*, pp. 153f., argues from II Samuel 5:7 and I Kings 9:16 that the *terminus ad quem* must be the times of David and Solomon, but his proof is far from certain, as in neither case is it said that the Jebusites or the Canaanites were completely driven out or destroyed.
(2) E.g., Raven, *op. cit.*, p. 152.

ponents of the theory admit these differences but explain them as being due to the use of minor different sources or to textual corruption after Joshua was separated from the Pentateuch, either one of which is a satisfactory possibility.

For those who hold to the documentary hypothesis the following brief analysis of the sources is suggested: Chapters 1-12 are made up primarily of JE material worked over to a certain extent by a deuteronomic redactor. The JE material has certain duplicate accounts; some scholars think that this shows use of distinct J and E material, though others think the combiner of J and E was responsible for the main part of this JE material, though he made use of other duplicating sources at times — sources not to be identified with either J or E. There is little, if any, P material present in this first half of the book. In chapters 13-24, P comes into prominence and becomes the most important source, though the other sources are present, and the JE material seems to be preferred as the framework.

We may suggest the following outline of the contents of the book:

1. *The conquest of the land,* 1-12.
   a. Joshua receives his orders, 1.
   b. The spies at Jericho, 2.
   c. The crossing of the Jordan, 3.
   4. Preparations for the conquest, 4-5.
   5. The fall of Jericho, 6.
   6. The conquest of Ai, 7-8.
   7. Conquests in the south, 9-10.
   8. Conquests in the north, 11.
   9. Summary of the conquered kings, 12.
2. *The division of the land,* 13-22.
   1. General instructions for Joshua, 13.
   2. Hebron given to Caleb, 14.

3. Territory west of Jordan divided, 15-19.
4. Cities of refuge and Levitical cities, 20-21.
5. The East-Jordan tribes blessed and sent off, 22.

3. *Farewell address and death of Joshua,* 23-24.

Some scholars cast doubt upon the historicity of the events in the book of Joshua by pointing to an apparent contradiction between the account of the conquest in Joshua and that in Judges. Joshua gives the impression that the conquest was made in a comparatively brief period of time and that the former inhabitants of the land were either destroyed or completely subjugated in the time of Joshua. Judges, on the other hand, seems to paint a different picture. The former inhabitants are still present and are strong enough to be a source of great difficulty throughout the whole period of the Judges. There is a very real difficulty here, though not an insuperable one. Joshua is telling mainly the story of the conquest made by the united nation, while Judges deals mainly with the problems of the smaller units. Even Joshua admits that there were some of the former inhabitants of the land still there for a long time afterward, such as the Jebusites in Jerusalem and the Canaanites in Ephraim. At most this problem could make us feel that Joshua was a bit too optimistic but should not throw doubt upon the general historicity of the events portrayed.

VI.

THE BOOK OF JUDGES

This book received its name in the Hebrew and in the versions from its subject matter. It is the history of Israel from the time of the death of Joshua until the birth of Samuel. The leaders of Israel were the twelve Judges. "Generals" would really be a better name for these men, as their exploits were primarily of a military nature, but we shall use the traditional name for them.

It is especially true in the book of Judges that the author is writing his history for a definitely religious purpose. The period covered was a time of much sin and apostasy. When Israel turned away from God in sin, God had to send His punishment upon the people, usually in the form of oppression by their enemies. When the people had learned their lesson and had turned back toward God and begged for His forgiveness, God raised up a deliverer for them. We see this cycle repeated over and over again. The Jews were very slow in learning the lessons of history — but we cannot throw too many stones. No attempt is made to give anything like a complete history of this period; the author selects those events that illustrate his theme, going into detail regarding some of the Judges, and passing by some very rapidly; we may thus distinguish between the major and the minor Judges.

The book of Judges gives not the slightest indication as to who its author was. There is an old Jewish tradition that Samuel was the author, but we cannot take that very seriously. The book takes us down to the time of Samuel, of course, and so the author must have been someone who lived at least as late as that time. Four

times the statement is made: "In those days there was no king in Israel," (17:6; 18:1; 19:1; and 21:25); the implication is rather clear that the book itself was written at a time when Israel did have a king.

Judges 1:21 speaks of the Jebusites as still living in Jerusalem "unto this day," and 1:27 says that the Canaanites were still in the land. That indicates that we cannot place the book too late in the time of the monarchy, though we cannot use such a passage as II Samuel 5:6-8 as final proof that it must have been written by the time of David. Some scholars allege that the historical references in Isaiah 9 prove that Judges was written before the time of Isaiah; but the most that can be shown is that Isaiah was acquainted with some of the material that is found now in Judges, which may simply have come from sources common to both books.

Scholars who hold to the documentary hypothesis of the Pentateuch usually carry their theories on into the book of Judges. Some scholars feel that the main body of the material was taken from the two prophetic sources, J and E, though it was definitely worked over by a deuteronomic editor. To this main part of the book some priestly editor added the introduction, 1:1 — 2:5, and the appendix, chapters 17-21; these were added much later but much of the information in them was taken from early sources. Other scholars do not see the connection with J and E, though they still see strong evidence of deuteronomic revision and certain priestly influence. In either case, however, the date of the final form of the book is pushed down into post-Exilic times, though much of the matter in the book may be considered early and quite trustworthy. The Song of Deborah is considered by some scholars to be the earliest literary work preserved in the Old Testament.

The book of Judges contains a very definite chronology:

		YEARS
3:8,	Israel serves Chushan-rishathaim	8
3:11,	Deliverance by Othniel; the land rests	40
3:14,	Israel serves Eglon	18
3:30,	Deliverance by Ehud; the land rests	80
4:2,	Oppression by Jabin	20
5:31,	Deliverance by Deborah; the land rests	40
6:1,	Oppression by Midian	7
8:28,	Deliverance by Gideon; the land rests	40
9:22,	Abimelech reigns over Israel	3
10:2,	Tola judges Israel	23
10:3,	Jair judges Israel	22
10:8,	Oppression by Ammon	18
12:7,	Jephthah judges Israel	6
12:9,	Ibzan judges Israel	7
12:11,	Elon judges Israel	10
12:14,	Abdon judges Israel	8
13:1,	Oppression by Philistines	40
15:20-16:31,	Samson judges Israel	20
	Total	410

This chronology, however, constitutes quite a problem for us. It seems too long to come in between any time we can set for the Exodus and the time of David, about 1000 B. C., the two points that can be best fixed in this general time. It is too long for the definite statement in I Kings 6:1 that Solomon began to build the temple in the fourth year of his reign, 480 years after the Exodus. But within that period of 480 years we must have 40 years of wandering, some years under Joshua, the period of the Judges, 40 years under Eli (I Sam. 4:18), some years under Saul, 40 years under David (I Kings 2:11) and the first four years under

Solomon. If we take the full 410 years for the Judges, we shall run far over the 480 years.

Various attempts have been made to solve this difficulty. It has been suggested that some of the dates in Judges look much like round numbers — 20, 40 and 80 years; the author seems to have had some definite chronological data, but he filled in the gaps with only approximate dates. It has also been suggested that the dates may overlap each other at times, though the book of Judges gives no indication that they were meant to do so.

We must admit that we cannot determine with any degree of exactness the amount of time covered by Judges. If we figure from the 480 years and subtract the other periods that are outside the period of the Judges, we get something like 300 years. If we try to fix it between the fixed points of the Exodus and the time of David, we must recognize that scholars are still debating the time of the Exodus. If we follow Kenyon and date it about 1440 B. C., we can get about the same results as when we work with the 480 years of Kings. If we follow Albright and date it about 1290, we must believe that the 480 years itself is somewhat too large, which would shorten the time of the Judges to about 200 years.

We may outline the contents of Judges as follows:

1. *Introduction,* 1:1 — 3:4.
2. *The stories of the Judges,* 3:5 — 16:31 (See the chronological table above for a fuller outline.)
3. *Appendix,* 17:1 — 21:25.

The book of Judges presents problems of various kinds to us, but there is much of real value in it for us. Though we cannot be sure of the solution of all the historical problems we find in the book, yet we do find trustworthy records of a very important time in the

history of the development of Israel. When Judges opened there was very little unity in Israel; when it closed we are on the verge of the unity of the monarchy. The moral standards of this time were not what we should desire in all too many respects, but we must remember that these were primitive days. Even so there were men who stood out in these dark days — men of heroism, men of devotion to Jehovah. Little by little God was leading His chosen people onward.

VII.

THE BOOKS OF SAMUEL

The books which we now know as First and Second Samuel were originally one in the Hebrew canon. The Septuagint divided the book into two, as it also divided the book of Kings; those books were called First, Second, Third and Fourth Kingdoms. The Latin Vulgate did the same thing except that it used "Kings" instead of "Kingdoms." The usage of the English Bible is something of a compromise: First and Second Samuel and First and Second Kings. We shall treat the two books of Samuel together as our unit of thought.

The books received their name from the great character Samuel, who was the chief actor of the first part of the books and who anointed the two kings that come into prominence in the latter part, Saul and David. There is a rabbinical tradition that Samuel was the author, but that is clearly erroneous, as the death of Samuel is recorded in I Samuel 25:1.

Samuel tells the story of the establishment of the kingdom. Samuel himself may be considered the last of the Judges. Under his leadership Saul is selected to be the first king. After his failure becomes evident, a new line is chosen — the line of David. The book takes us through his reign to the very last years, though his death comes in I Kings 2:10. Thus Samuel, Saul and David are the three chief actors of the books of Samuel.

The contents of the books may be outlined as follows:

1. *The judgeship of Samuel,* I Sam. 1-7.
   a. Birth and childhood, 1-3.

b. Death of Eli, 4.
c. The ark of the Philistines, 5-7.

2. *The reign of Saul*, I Sam. 8-31.
   a. Israel asks for a king, 8.
   b. Saul is made king, 9-10.
   c. The conquest of Saul, 11-14.
   d. The rejection of Saul, 15.
   e. The anointing of David, 16:1-13.
   f. Saul, Jonathan and David, 16:14-30:31.
   g. The death of Saul and his sons, 31.
3. *The reign of David*, II Sam. 1-24.
   a. David's sorrow for Saul and Jonathan, 1.
   b. David becomes king over Judah and Israel, 2-5.
   c. David and the ark and temple, 6-7.
   d. David's victories, 8-10.
   e. David's great sins, 11-12.
   f. Absalom and his rebellion, 13-19.
   g. The rebellion of Sheba, 20.
   h. The last days of David, 21-24.

The book gives no hint as to its authorship. The only hint from external sources, the rabbinic tradition of the authorship of Samuel, is clearly wrong. The name of the author must remain unknown.

When was the book written? It takes us down to the closing years of the reign of David; so it could not have been written before that time. Some feel that it must have been written before the death of David, as that event is not recorded. The statement of I Sam. 27:6, "Wherefore Ziklag pertaineth unto the kings of Judah unto this day," points rather clearly to a time after the division of the kingdom; there was something of a division between Israel and Judah in David's time, of course, but that whole expression would hardly be appropriate in the time of David. Some time in the

early years of the divided kingdom would probably be as early as we should date the completed book, though the sources from which the book was compiled in many cases seem to be contemporaneous with the events they describe.

How much of a unity is Samuel? It is recognized by all scholars as highly probable that the book was made up from various sources. At times these sources are fuller and more nearly contemporaneous than at others. At times different emphases are brought out in the different sources. Some scholars think that these differences are so great at times that they cannot be harmonized, so they consider them doublets, or even triplets, coming from divergent sources that were not carefully assimilated by the final redactor. They point to double accounts of the condemnation of Eli, the rejection of Saul, David's coming to court, negotiations for Saul's daughter, David's flight from court, David's having Saul in his power, David's seeking refuge with Achish and the death of Saul; and to a triple account of Saul's appointment as king. They point also to certain stylistic differences and differences in point of view; for example, at times Samuel seems to be a local seer and at times the hero of the nation; at times the choosing of a king is taken as an act of apostasy, while at times it seems to meet with the complete approval of Samuel.

Other scholars believe that all of these seeming discrepancies can be harmonized. There are very definite difficulties, and it must be admitted that there is some weight in these numerous possible doublets. Each one should be considered in detail with all honesty when the student seeks to understand the details of the book.

It is certain that various sources were available for use by the final author of the book. Can we analyze the

book into its sources and stages of composition? Those scholars who hold to the documentary hypothesis of the Pentateuch usually present some analysis for Samuel also. Some of them believe that the two primary sources were J and E; where there are doublets, J gives the earlier form and E the later. The J and E material was combined and worked over by an editor of the deuteronomic school, so that the book reached its final form some time near 600 B. C. Other scholars prefer not to identify their sources with J and E, though they, too, distinguish between earlier and later sources, especially where there are doublets. Some of these scholars, however, date at least some of their sources as more nearly contemporaneous with the events they describe than can be done on the J and E theory. They usually see some deuteronomic redactions also. Some scholars see even a little priestly influence, though those places were almost certainly late insertions, as they are not found in the Septuagint.

Whatever view may be taken as to the date and methods of composition of the book in its final form, all scholars recognize that it contains much information of a high degree of historical reliability, and that it tells its stories in the finest style of Hebrew history.

We cannot determine exactly how much time is covered in Samuel, but it must have been about a century, from about 1085 B. C. to 977 B. C.

VIII.

THE BOOKS OF KINGS

As we saw in connection with the books of Samuel, the two books of Kings were originally one book; it is quite evident that the two should be considered the literary unit.

The book of Kings starts at the close of the life of David and goes down to the Babylonian captivity. It covers the period from about 970 to 586 B. C. It tells the story of the life of Solomon in great detail. Then it tells the stories of the kings of Judah and Israel together until the fall of Samaria and the captivity and disappearance of the Northern Kingdom in 722 B. C. Then it continues the stories of the kings of the Southern Kingdom until the time of the Babylonian captivity of 586 B. C. We may outline the contents of the book as follows:

1. *The kingship of Solomon,* I Kings 1-11.
   a. Solomon becomes king in place of David, 1-2.
   b. The piety and wisdom of Solomon, 3-4.
   c. The construction and dedication of the temple, 5-8.
   d. The greatness of Solomon, 9-10.
   e. The apostasy and death of Solomon, 11.
2. *The kings of Judah and Israel,* I Kings 12 — II Kings 17.
   We shall not attempt a more detailed outline; it should be noted that the prophets Elijah and Elisha play prominent parts in this section.
3. *The kings of Judah,* II Kings 18-25. From the captivity of the Northern Kingdom to that of the Southern.

In the second section of the book the author has to carry the history of the two kingdoms along together. He does not use parallel columns, so he adopts a set plan of presenting his material. He will start with the reign of a king of one kingdom and synchronize it with the reign of the king in the other kingdom. Then he will tell the whole story of the reign of the first king. When that is completed he will go back and bring in the reigns of all the kings of the other kingdom that overlapped his first king. Thus he goes back and forth until the Northern Kingdom passes out of the picture. It is easy enough then to complete the story of the remaining kings of the Southern Kingdom.

The formula of synchronization is quite regular. He gives the year of the reign of the king in the other kingdom. He gives the age at which the king came to the throne and the length of his reign. He gives the name of the king's mother. Then he gives the religious verdict on the reign of the king. At times the formula is somewhat shorter for the kings of Israel.

The chronology of this period presents some minor problems. Toward the close of the period we come to dates that can be fixed quite accurately from Babylonian and Assyrian archaeology, and so we must keep them in view as fixed points; Samaria fell in 722 and the Babylonian captivity began in 586. The beginning of the period can be fixed fairly accurately. Then it is possible to work in the dates given in Kings rather well, though there are some minor problems. We must remember that a part of a year can be counted as a full year, and also that corruptions in numbers can very easily creep into the text. Tables covering this period may be found in dictionary and encyclopedia articles on chronology; if the student will compare several tables

he will notice a rather high degree of agreement between them.

The book gives no hint as to who its author was. The Jewish Talmud says that the book was written by Jeremiah, though that is probably only a guess that should not be taken too seriously. Jeremiah goes down into Egypt after the captivity, whereas Kings continues the story of Jehoiachin in Babylonia for a bit; so Jeremiah does not fit very well as a possible author. As the book carries the history down to 586 B. C., the author must have written some time after that date. As he does not tell about the restoration from captivity it is rather likely that the book was not written long after the restoration at least. Some time during the Exile or shortly thereafter is the most probable date for the composition.

The author, however, had access to sources that were much closer to the events recorded. He mentions the Book of the Acts of Solomon once, the Book of the Chronicles of the Kings of Israel seventeen times and the Book of the Chronicles of the Kings of Judah fifteen times. We know nothing about these sources except what we learn of them from Kings. They may have been records kept by some officials of the kings' courts. They may have been histories written by certain prophets whose names we do not know. The author may also have had access to other sources which he did not name, especially for the stories of the two great prophets, Elijah and Elisha. II Kings 18:17 — 20:19 is very closely parallel to Isaiah 36-39; one author may have used the other, or they may have had access to some common source. From the fact that the history of the temple is told so fully it is reasonable to conjecture that the temple archives may have been used by the author. The author, then, used such sources as these and put their material together into one continuous whole. Al-

most certainly the author was responsible for the synchronizations himself, and also for the judgment which he passes upon each king.

Scholars who hold to the documentary hypothesis of the Pentateuch usually see some of their familiar sources and redactors at work in Kings. J and E may account for some part of the historical narrative, though J and E are usually dated earlier than much of the material in Kings; some scholars see no connection between J and E and Kings. Most of these scholars, however, are quite certain that the real author or compiler of Kings was a person, or persons, imbued with the spirit of the deuteronomic school. The judgment passed upon each king is in thorough keeping with the book of Deuteronomy. The author was, of course, a member of the Southern Kingdom, and it is interesting to notice that he passes an unfavorable verdict upon every single king of the Northern Kingdom. Some critics think that the book was compiled in several stages, the earliest stage being pre-Exilic with the Exilic material being added later. Some critics think of very minor parts of the book as being later priestly interpolations, though on rather slight grounds.

The book presents historical material, but it does not attempt to be a modern, secular history. The author was interested primarily in the religious aspects of the history, and over and over again he tells the reader to refer to the various chronicles available if he wants to know more of the historical facts than he has seen fit to present. As we are able to test the historical matter presented it seems to be substantially accurate, always allowing for the possibility of textual corruptions, especially in the case of numbers. The author was certainly fair in bringing out the evil facts in regard to his heroes as well as their virtues. The primary purpose of the

author was to show how God blessed those who honored Him and punished those who turned away from Him. And is there any lesson which the nations of the world even today need any more than that?

Thus we come to the end of a magnificent historical cycle, starting with the Creation of the world and going down into the Exile.

IX.

THE BOOKS OF CHRONICLES

We have seen one cycle of the history of the Israelites from Genesis through Kings. This was contained in the first section of the Jewish canon, the Pentateuch, and in the first part of the second section, the Prophets. There is another cycle of history which is contained in the third section, the *kethubhim*, or the Writings. This cycle is contained in the books of Chronicles, Ezra and Nehemiah. It goes back to Adam and comes down well beyond the restoration from the Exile, to about 400 B. C.

The Hebrew order has Ezra and Nehemiah before Chronicles, possibly because Ezra and Nehemiah contain material that is entirely new, while Chronicles is a repetition of material contained in earlier books. It is clear, however, that Ezra and Nehemiah record events that took place after those recorded in Chronicles; so we shall follow the order which we find in our English Bibles: Chronicles, Ezra, Nehemiah.

Like Samuel and Kings, Chronicles was originally one book. The Hebrew name was "Affairs of the Days," which Jerome translated *Chronicon*, from which we get our "Chronicles." The Septuagint name was "The Things Left Over," which was probably due to the fact that Chronicles tells about many things which were not recorded in Samuel and Kings.

The contents of Chronicles may be outlined as follows:

1. *Genealogies, from Adam to Saul,* I Chron. 1-10.
2. *The reign of David,* I Chron. 11-29.
3. *The reign of Solomon,* II Chron. 1-9.

4. *The history of Judah until the decree for the restoration from exile,* II Chron. 10-36.

It is to be noted that the history before David is given only by way of genealogical tables. It is not to be supposed that Chronicles attempts a complete coverage of every generation between Adam and David. At times there are evident gaps. It was also very easy for textual corruption to creep into such long lists of names, for some names to drop out and for other names to be spelled in ways different from those found in the earlier books. The author gives special emphasis to the genealogies of the faithful tribes: Judah, Benjamin and Levi.

The reigns of David and Solomon are given in great detail. Those were the two greatest kings, but the author was especially interested in them because of their connection with the building of the temple and the institution of so much of the temple ritual, things very dear to the heart of the author.

After the division of the kingdom, the Chronicler follows only the history of the Southern Kingdom, Judah. He gives a brief history of each of the kings until the time of the Exile. The Exile itself is passed over very briefly. The book closes with Cyrus giving permission to the Jews to return to their own land, which leads us to the book of Ezra.

It is to be seen that Chronicles covers the same ground as that covered in Genesis to Kings. Especially in Samuel and Kings the parallelism with Chronicles is very marked. When we make a study of the parallel passages certain facts become evident.

As we have noted, Chronicles omits the history of the Northern Kingdom entirely. The author of Kings had passed an unfavorable judgment upon every one of the kings of that kingdom. They had been taken

into captivity in 722 and had disappeared from the scene. It is not strange that the Chronicler should omit Israel and concentrate on Judah, the continuing kingdom.

The Chronicler also very carefully omitted reference to the great sins of his two great heroes, David and Solomon. We are glad that the authors of the earlier books gave us the evil as well as the good so that we might form a more true estimate of them. The Chronicler was under no oath, however, to tell the *whole* truth; he chose those matters that suited his purposes.

Chronicles inserted much matter that was not found in Samuel and Kings. When we look at this new material we find that it is largely concerned with the temple and other matters of ritualistic interest. This is really the distinctive contribution of Chronicles.

At times there are discrepancies between Chronicles and the earlier books when they are telling the same story. Usually those discrepancies refer to names and numbers, especially the latter. Nearly always the numbers are much greater in Chronicles; frequently they are so large as to be incredible, even if we did not have the smaller numbers in the earlier books. These discrepancies constitute real problems for the interpreter and for students of the theory of inspiration, especially for one who tries to hold to a theory of historical inerrancy. That there are definite contradictions in the best texts of these books that we now have cannot be doubted. It may be possible to blame those errors on a corrupt transmission of the Hebrew texts, though the corruptions may have been in the sources used by the Chronicler and may have been in Chronicles from the time of its composition.

The interest of Chronicles is definitely centered in ecclesiastical matters. It does not pretend to give any-

thing like a complete, objective historical picture. We definitely prefer the books of Samuel and Kings as sources of historical facts; that is not strange when we recognize the purpose of the Chronicler and the probably corrupt state of the text of his book or his sources. But we are very glad to have a book which does give a rather full treatment of the ritual of the Jews. Ritual may easily be overemphasized or misused, but it can also be a most important adjunct to true worship. Ritual can emphasize the importance of moral purity and the need for dealing with the problem of sin. In the New Testament we see examples of those who had taken ritual as a substitute for the deeper, more fundamental parts of religion; but we also see the One who came to fulfill the things toward which the Jewish ritual had been pointing.

The books of Chronicles mention many sources: the book of the kings of Judah and Israel, and the writings of the prophets Samuel, Nathan, Gad, Ahijah, Shemaiah, Iddo, Jehu and Isaiah. The Chronicler also had access to various genealogical tables. The parallelism is so close to Samuel and Kings at times that it is virtually certain that he had access to those books; some think that he meant those books when he referred to the book of the kings of Judah and Israel, but he assigns some material to that book which is not found in our books in their present form; e.g., I Chron. 9:1; II Chron. 27:7; 33:18; 36:8. As the Chronicler was vitally interested in matters of the temple it is quite likely that he had access to the temple records.

The books of Chronicles do not name their author. The Jewish tradition is that Ezra was the author, and that Nehemiah added the material that took place after the time of Ezra, which was, of course, very little. That

tradition is coupled with the belief that Ezra was the author of the book of Ezra and Nehemiah of Nehemiah.

It is quite evident that these three books were produced in the same general period of time by an author, or authors, of highly ecclesiastical interests; the Hebrew of all three books is late, and the same literary style pervades them.

There are certain objections to the theory that Ezra was the author of Chronicles, however.

That theory would make the author of Nehemiah definitely a different person. However, this is no fatal objection. The similarities in the three books point to either one author or to authors of the same general time of similar interests.

In I Chronicles 3:19-24 the genealogy of the line of David is carried down to Zerubbabel and several generations after him. Some scholars interpret verse 21 in such a way as to see six generations after Zerubbabel. The text of the Septuagint here is somewhat different, and that can be interpreted so as to go eleven generations beyond Zerubbabel; some scholars, including Cornill, believe that the Septuagint text is to be preferred to the Hebrew at this point. If we go either six or eleven generations beyond Zerubbabel we would go beyond the time of Ezra, so he would be eliminated as a possible author. It must be admitted, however, that the interpretation, as well as the text, of these verses is far from clear. The sons and grandsons of Zerubbabel are clearly mentioned, but it is not equally clear that verse 21b means to go four more generations down that line.

The mention of the Persian coin "daric" in I Chron. 29:7 would fit in very well with any possible date from the time of Ezra even a bit into the Greek period, after 330 B. C.

There are some other points that bear on this problem that should be brought up in connection with the authorship of the book of Ezra; so we shall reserve further comment until then.

X.

THE BOOK OF EZRA

This book was named from its principal character, Ezra; some think that Ezra was also the author, but we shall consider that later. The Septuagint calls the book Second Ezra, First Ezra being an apocryphal book. The Vulgate calls our book First Ezra, Second Ezra being our Nehemiah. The Massoretes considered Ezra-Nehemiah one book, as they considered the Minor Prophets one; this made the books of the Old Testament correspond to the number of letters in the Hebrew alphabet, twenty-two. The Massoretes put their notes at the end of Nehemiah, called the whole book Ezra and said that the middle verse was our Neh. 3:32.

The book of Ezra has two distinct divisions:

1. *The Return from Exile and Building of the Temple*, 1-6.
2. *The Mission of Ezra and His Reforms*, 7-10.

The first division starts with the first year of Cyrus, about 539 B. C., when Babylon fell into the hands of the Persians and the Persians granted the Jews permission to return to Jerusalem. Ezra 2 gives a list of those who returned. They again established the altar and solemnized the Feast of Tabernacles. They laid the foundation stone of the Temple and began to rebuild it. Their enemies got Cyrus to forbid the building of the Temple, but later, under Darius, the work was started again. Haggai and Zechariah urged them on, until the Temple was completed and dedicated, on the 3rd of Adar in the 6th year of Darius (Ezra 6:15), about Mar. 3, 515 B. C.

The second division starts after a considerable interval in the fifth month of the seventh year of Artaxerxes, about 458 B. C. Ezra is sent by the King from Babylonia to Jerusalem as a royal commissioner. He takes with him quite a group of Jews; the names of the heads of the families are given in chapter 8. Ezra is particularly grieved to find how many had married foreign wives, and a commission is appointed to deal with the problem of the mixed marriages. There is a beautiful penitential prayer, and then the book closes rather abruptly with a list of those who had married foreign wives.

There are two sections of the book in which Aramaic is used rather than Hebrew: 4:8-6:18 and 7:12-26. These sections contain official documents, and it is quite appropriate that that language should have been used for them. It is highly probable that the author incorporated these original sources bodily into his book. There are certain points in them which seem somewhat Jewish, but they may be easily explained by supposing that Ezra himself had something to do with the forming of the decree.

The section 7:27-9:15 is written in the first person. These verses seem clearly to have been taken from memoirs of Ezra himself. After the most intense criticism has been made, even most radical critics consider these verses as firsthand documents of the highest value.

Elsewhere in the book, Ezra is spoken of in the third person.

The Jewish tradition is that Ezra himself was the author. The testimony of the book itself is not at all conclusive; the section where the first person is used would seem to indicate that Ezra was the author, while the rest of the book would seem to indicate that he was not. It may be that some other person was the author

and simply incorporated Ezra's memoirs without changing the pronouns; it may be that Ezra was the author and for some reason spoke of himself in the third person at times. The remarks about Ezra in 7:6 and 10 seem somewhat too laudatory to have come from Ezra himself, though we cannot be certain of that.

Some see a sign of a later date for the book as a whole in the fact that the title "King of Persia" is used, whereas in the memoirs of Ezra section "the King" is used. That can be considered very slight proof; one can speak of "the President" or "the President of the United States" now, not implying that a new nation had come to displace the United States.

In 10:6 Johanan is mentioned. Some see in this a proof that the book was not written until long after the time of Ezra. In Neh. 12:10 and 22 Johanan or Jonathan is the grandson of Eliashib, who was the high priest in Ezra's time (the "son of" used in both Ezra and Nehemiah is not inconsistent with the statement that he was the grandson). It is quite possible, however, that the high priest may have had a grandson old enough to have appeared on the scene in the time of Ezra himself; a grandson of Eliashib is mentioned in Neh. 13:28 as having been married in the time of Nehemiah.

In Ezra 4:6-23 there are records of events which took place in the reigns of Xerxes and Artaxerxes; then follows a record of events which took place under the earlier king Darius. It is asserted that Ezra would never have confused events in such a way as this, so that the book must have been written by some later author. Possibly so. Yet it is to be noted that the book completes the subject of the opposition of the Jews and then goes back to take up another subject; this fact may well account for the strange chronological order without

supposing any mistake or ignorance on the part of the author.

There are those who think that Chronicles, Ezra and Nehemiah were all written by one author at the same time; so evidences for later dates for any of the books would apply to all of them. We shall consider this a bit more in connection with the authorship of Nehemiah.

XI.

THE BOOK OF NEHEMIAH

This book is named from its principal character; some think that he was also the author. The Septuagint uses the same name, while the Vulgate calls the book "Second Ezra."

The book may be divided as follows:

1. *The rebuilding of the walls and various reforms at the time of Nehemiah's first visit, about 444 B. C.*, 1-7.
2. *The reading of the Book of the Law of Moses, the Feast of Tabernacles, the covenant to keep the law*, 8-10.
3. *Lists of princes, priests and Levites; dedication of the walls*, 11-13:3.
4. *Reforms of Nehemiah's second governorship*, 13:4-31.

Ezra was a priest, a scribe, while Nehemiah was a layman. In many respects he was one of the most attractive characters of the Old Testament. He had power and did not hesitate to use it, but never for selfish motives. He was a man of energy and a man of consecration. He and Ezra made a splendid pair to carry the Jewish people over this time of great crisis. The prophets Haggai and Zechariah had a great part to play at this time also.

We have the same phenomenon in reference to the use of the first and third personal pronouns in Nehemiah as we had in Ezra, though the first person is used more frequently in Nehemiah, especially from 1:1 to 7:5 and in the 13th chapter. And the book starts with the

words: "The words of Nehemiah the son of Hachaliah." Again we must face the problem as to whether Nehemiah was the author of the book and at times spoke of himself in the third person, or whether a later author incorporated memoirs of Nehemiah without changing the first person to the third.

The Jewish tradition assigns the authorship to Nehemiah, and the evidence we have just considered may point in the same direction. Yet there are certain points that seem to contradict this.

In Neh. 12:26 and 47 the "days of Nehemiah" are spoken of as though they were in the far-distant past. This lacks something of being positive proof, however; Nehemiah himself may have used the phrase to continue the parallelism, as he had been referring to the times of his predecessors.

In Neh. 12:11 and 22, Jaddua was mentioned. According to Josephus, Jaddua was high priest in the time of Alexander the Great, about 330 B. C. It looks as if the book must have been written much later than the time of Nehemiah to have brought in this mention of Jaddua. It is barely possible that Jaddua was so old when Alexander entered Jerusalem in 332 B. C. that he could have been a youth in the time of Nehemiah. Others think that this list of priests was inserted at a later time but that the book as a whole was the work of Nehemiah.

Neh. 12:22 mentions a Darius in the same verse that mentions Jaddua. Some identify this with Darius Codomannus, a contemporary of Alexander the Great, and use this as a proof for a later date for the book. However, it may well be that the Darius mentioned was a contemporary of the youthful Jaddua, Darius Nothus, about 424-395 B. C.

Let us now consider the theory of the common authorship of Chronicles, Ezra and Nehemiah.

It is quite evident that these books are closely related. They all come from post-Exilic times. They all have a great interest in matters of ritual and priesthood. The last verses of Chronicles are the same as the first verses of Ezra. The Hebrew style is quite similar. And there are certain hints in each of the books, as we have noted, that seem to indicate that they were composed later than the times of Ezra and Nehemiah.

It should be recognized that it is impossible to be absolutely certain about these points. Nothing in the books themselves gives any direct proof of authorship, though it is easy to see how certain hints may have given rise to the Jewish tradition that Ezra wrote Ezra and most of Chronicles, and that Nehemiah wrote Nehemiah and finished Chronicles. The indications for a later date are by no means conclusive, though together they have considerable weight. None of the points mentioned quite proves a unity of authorship, though again we may say that taken together they are worthy of serious consideration.

We should say that it is still possible to believe in the traditional authorship of these books.

Likewise it is quite possible for a Conservative to believe that the books were written by some later, unknown person, whom we may call the "Chronicler." He probably lived in the early Greek period, after about 330 B. C. He had various sources for his books, including the priceless memoirs of Ezra and Nehemiah.

So far we have presented the widely-accepted, traditional view that Ezra preceded Nehemiah. However, in recent years it has become quite popular to believe that the true chronological order is just the reverse. The question is a highly complicated one. The text as it stands can be fitted into the new order if we make the king Artaxerxes II, rather than Artaxerxes I;

some have suggested that the "seventh year" (Ezra 7:7) was originally a somewhat larger number. The situation in Ezra seems to presuppose the work of someone like Nehemiah. The orders of Ezra are much more strict than those of Nehemiah. In some respects it is easier to outline the history on the theory of the priority of Nehemiah. The technical student would do well to investigate this theory at some length; the average student should be aware of it as an interesting possibility.

Part Three
The Prophetical Books
The Latter Prophets

XII.

THE PROPHETS

We come now to the second part of the second division of the Hebrew canon, the Latter Prophets. We have already studied what they called the Former Prophets, Joshua, Judges, Samuel and Kings, in connection with the historical books. The Jews counted the Twelve Minor Prophets as one book, and so they had four books in this section: Isaiah, Jeremiah, Ezekiel and the Twelve. The book of Daniel is to come later, in the Writings.

The word "prophet" comes from two Greek words meaning either to foretell or to speak forth, to proclaim. In the Hebrew, there are two words that are translated "seer": one, *roeh*, comes from the regular word for seeing, while the other, *hozeh*, comes from the word which denotes intellectual or spiritual apprehension. The etymology of the word regularly translated "prophet," *navi*, is somewhat doubtful; some think that it comes from the word which means to bubble up or to gush forth: that is, to be filled by inspiration so that the message gushes forth; others think that it means to proclaim or to announce. The prophets were also called men of God, servants of Jehovah and messengers of Jehovah.

It has often been assumed that the sole duty of the prophet was to predict events that would take place in

the future. God did see fit at times to roll back the veil and allow some of His servants to see what would occur later. The fact that predictions were made and were later fulfilled is one of the strong proofs for the inspiration of Scripture.

Radical criticism seeks to avoid the force of this apologetic in two ways. One way is to say that the supposed prophecy was uttered after the event that it was supposed to predict. The other is to give an interpretation to the passage that will keep it from being a prediction of a future event. One of these must be done by one who does not believe in the possibility of the miraculous.

Many Conservatives, on the other hand, have dealt unfairly with the prophets in regard to the predictive element. They see predictions entirely too often. We must be very careful in applying the principles of grammatico-historical interpretation to try to see if the original writing claimed to be a prediction or not. We weaken our case tremendously if we drag in passages which were never intended to be predictions at all.

A word of caution should be uttered in regard to the use of the word translated "fulfill" in the New Testament. That word, *pleroo*, is much broader in meaning than the English word "fulfill." We frequently find the phrase "this happened in order that it might be fulfilled which was spoken." At times that refers to a definite prediction in the Old Testament and its fulfillment in the New. At times, however, that is not the case at all. At times, for example, in the Psalms David is speaking of some experience that he had had; then later David's Greater Son had a similar but even greater experience, which filled full David's experience. That is a perfectly proper use of the Greek word translated "fulfill," but we should be quite unfair to the

Old Testament passage to see in the historical statement a prediction of a future event.

There is real prediction in the writings of the prophets, but we should recognize that there is far more there. The prophets did much more forth-telling than foretelling. God's messages to them dealt far more with the present than with the future. They came to proclaim God's will for His people, to plead with them to do that which was right and to condemn them when they did wrong. We shall see this element very clearly as we proceed with our study.

Besides the prophets whose messages are recorded in the books which bear their name, many others are mentioned in the Old Testament. Especially prominent are Elijah and Elisha, whose stories are told rather fully in the books of Kings.

From time to time mention is made of "the sons of the prophets." It is not to be supposed that these were the actual sons of some of the prophets. In accordance with a common Hebrew idiom, the phrase means simply persons endowed with the spirit of the prophets. They seem to have been groups of protegés of the prophets or prophets of secondary importance.

As the office of the prophet was very important, it is only natural that there should have been impostors who claimed the prophetic power. Time and time again the true prophets have to contend with false prophets. The false prophets would justify the sins of the people and say that God would not punish them, whereas the true prophets always condemned sin and at times had to predict times of punishment for the people. It is not surprising that the false prophets were far more popular in their day than the true ones; yet the verdict of time has been plain.

Much work has been done in an attempt to understand the methods by which God revealed His will to the prophets, but from the very nature of the case nothing certain can be ascertained. At times God seems to have worked through perfectly normal means. The messages of the prophets were ones that should have been perfectly plain to men of normal intelligence and spiritual insight. At times the prophets seem to have been men of very superior intellectual and moral insight, to have been far ahead of the average man of their age. At times, however, their messages can be explained only by the theory that God spoke to them in some supernatural way. At times there were visions. At times the prophets went into trances. At times we are told nothing of the mechanics of the revelation. God, by natural and supernatural means, supervised certain men and made them His spokesmen, for their own ages and for the ages to come.

Much of the work of the Old Testament priests was only temporary and preparatory. But the prophets dealt with eternal principles; so the modern student can expect to find much very profitable matter in their books.

Much of the material in the Prophets was directly applicable to conditions of their own times. In order that we may apply their messages to our times, we must come to understand their times as much as possible so that we may be able to distinguish between the great eternal principles and the temporary application of them to certain specific times. The principles will endure, but each age must make the application of them to its own problems.

XIII.

THE BOOK OF AMOS

Amos was the first of the literary prophets whose works can be rather accurately dated. This fact makes his work important to us, for from this time on we are in a position to date and place accurately the religious development of the Israelites as we see it reflected in their outstanding religious leaders, the prophets.

The name Amos means "burden" or "burden-bearer." From 1:1 and 7:14 we learn that he was a herdsman: the word comes from the word meaning a small sheep with very fine wool, and so it is probable that he was a shepherd who tended this kind of sheep. 7:14 also tells us that he was "a gatherer of sycamore fruit." Since sycamore trees do not grow at an altitude of more than 1,000 feet and Tekoa is about 3,000 feet, Amos must have owned or worked in fields some distance away from his home. Tekoa, his home (1:1), was about ten miles south of Jerusalem. Amos was a citizen of the Southern Kingdom, yet his ministry was to the Northern Kingdom, Israel.

Amos gives a rather definite dating of his book in the first verse. We are not able to date the earthquake he mentioned, but the dates of the kings he mentions can be fixed rather well. Uzziah was the king of Judah, and Jeroboam II the king of Israel. As the dates are determined by Assyrian chronology, those kings were contemporaries from about 782 to 753 B. C. About 760 would be very close to the time of the prophecy of Amos.

This was a time of great national glory and prosperity in Israel. Not many years before this time, Israel had been ground under the heel of Syria; II Kings 13:7

tells us that the king of Syria had left Jehoahaz only fifty horsemen, ten chariots and ten thousand footmen. But deliverance had come for Israel from an unexpected source, from Assyria. The Assyrian king, Adad-nirari IV, subdued the Syrians but did not come into Israel. For a half century Israel was left to herself, free from any foreign domination, either from the direction of Assyria to the north or Egypt to the south. Joash and Jeroboam II used this opportunity of restoring the lost territory and prosperity of Israel so that by the latter part of Jeroboam's reign Israel was highly prosperous and confident of the future. The people thought that they were living in days like those of David and Solomon.

It must have been a terrible shock to the men of Israel when a humble shepherd from the Southern Kingdom appeared in their midst with his denunciations and predictions of doom. Underneath all their outward prosperity and religiosity Amos could see injustice and immorality, and he knew that God would not allow prosperity to last when it was built on such a foundation.

The contents of the book may be outlined as follows:

1. *Judgment upon the surrounding nations,* 1-2. Amos denounces the sins of nations round about Israel and finally comes to Israel herself; starting with Damascus, he gets closer and closer as he goes through Philistia, Tyre, Edom, Ammon, Moab and Judah. It is easier to see sins in others. Finally the matter is brought home to the very door of Israel.

2. *The three addresses of condemnation against Israel,* 3-6. Chapters 3, 4 and 5 start with the words, "Hear this word." In these addresses Amos reminds Israel of her privileges and shows that they produce obligations. But he shows how Israel has failed to live up to those high obligations. Amos paints a terrible

picture of social injustice, personal immorality and perverted ritualism in religion. God has warned Israel by famine, drought, pestilence and other disasters, but Israel has failed to heed His warnings. Amos calls the people to repent so that God can be gracious to them. But he predicts a dire destruction for them if they will not. 5:27: "Therefore will I cause you to go into captivity beyond Damascus, saith the Lord, whose name is the God of hosts." And 6:14: "But, behold, I will raise up against you a nation, O house of Israel, saith the Lord the God of hosts; and they shall afflict you from the entering in of Hemath unto the river of the wilderness."

3. *The five visions of judgment,* 7:1-9:8a. The judgments to come upon sinful Israel are symbolized in the visions of the locusts, the fire, the plumbline, the basket of summer fruit and the smiting of the altar. 7:10-17 interrupts the visions and shows the attempt of Amaziah, the priest of Bethel, to get Amos to stop such predictions of doom; Amos refuses to give up his God-given mission and predicts a terrible doom upon Amaziah himself.

4. *Promises of restoration and prosperity,* 9:8b-15. The destruction of the nation for sin is not to be permanent and complete. "And I will bring again the captivity of my people of Israel, and they shall build the waste cities, and inhabit them; and they shall plant vineyards, and drink the wine thereof; they shall also make gardens, and eat the fruit of them. And I will plant them upon their land, and they shall no more be pulled up out of their land which I have given them, saith the Lord thy God." Thus the book closes with a beautiful ray of light, of hope; God's gracious purposes will not be eternally defeated by man's sin.

The book of Amos has comparatively few critical questions connected with it. Virtually all modern

scholars are convinced that Amos himself was the author of the book in almost, if not exactly, its present form. The book dovetails perfectly with all we know of the period and of the people and nations mentioned. There is a definite literary unity throughout the book; we see the striking way in which Amos gave God's message to meet the conditions of his age.

Some scholars, especially those who do not believe in the possibility of true predictive prophecy, do not believe that the final section, 9:8b-15, which predicts the restoration from captivity, was the work of Amos. They think that it would be possible for a human being to be sure that God would punish the Israelites for their sins, but that it would be impossible for one to foresee a captivity and then a restoration; so that part would have to be dated in the latter part of the captivity or in post-Exilic times. That argument has little weight for the scholar who believes that Amos spoke under divine inspiration and could give God's prediction to His people. Surely it is more appropriate — and far more in keeping with God's eternal purpose — that the message close with a note of triumph rather than tragedy.

Other smaller interpolations are claimed by certain scholars, but there is little agreement among them, and their reasons are entirely too subjective to carry any real weight. The Conservative scholar does not deny the possibility of interpolations creeping into the text of Scripture, but he fails to find enough evidence to convince him that the book of Amos is not a complete literary unit.

XIV.

THE BOOK OF HOSEA

The name Hosea means "salvation." Hosea was a younger contemporary of Amos. Like Amos, also, his mission was to the Northern Kingdom, Israel. He seems, however, to have been a native of Israel, as he speaks of its king as "our king" (7:5) and seems to be well acquainted with the circumstances of the Northern Kingdom and addresses his messages directly to it. Hosea is the son of Beeri (1:1), but we know nothing further of him.

Hosea dates the beginning of his book (1:1) in the reigns of Uzziah, Jotham, Ahaz and Hezekiah, kings of Judah, and Jeroboam, the son of Joash (that is, Jeroboam II), king of Israel. The first part of his book evidently deals with the latter years of the reign of Jeroboam II, that time of great glory and prosperity but also of injustice and immorality, of spiritual whoredom. The latter part of the book, after chapters 1-3, seems clearly to have come from the period following the death of Jeroboam. That was a time of great disorder. King followed king in rapid succession. Zechariah became king about 746 B. C.; Shallum, 745; Menahem, 745; Pekahiah, 737; Pekah, 735; Hoshea, 733; and Samaria fell in 722. The Assyrian menace was coming closer and closer. Some of the Israelites looked to Assyria for help, while others looked to Egypt. Three of the kings of Israel were murdered: Zechariah, Pekahiah and Pekah. The latter part of Hosea seems to reflect these troublous days. From the fact that Gilead is spoken of in 6:8 and 12:11 without any reference to a judgment having befallen it, it is quite likely

that the book was written before 734, the year in which Tiglath-pileser deported the people of the region beyond the Jordan (referred to in II Kings 15:29). Likewise there is no mention of Pekah's attack upon Judah in 735. Thus the book may be dated over the period a little before the death of Jeroboam II, in about 746, to about 736. Hosea may have lived on into the time of Hezekiah, who became king of Judah about 719 B. C., though some scholars doubt the originality of the text in 1:1, and there are certainly no allusions in the book to the historic fact of the fall of Samaria in 722, the fulfillment of the doom he had been predicting. 750 to 736 may be considered very close to the date of the prophecies recorded in Hosea.

The first three chapters give us intimate details of the family life of Hosea. It is now universally agreed that these chapters record true history. There are, however, still some problems in them. Is the woman of chapter 1 the same as that of chapter 3? She is called "a wife of whoredoms" in chapter 1 and "an adulteress" in chapter 3; she is named Gomer in chapter 1 and not named in chapter 3. We cannot be absolutely certain, but it is probable that there was only one woman involved. Her sins made several evil names appropriate. Surely only one adulterous wife of God, Israel, is meant to be symbolized; so we shall proceed on the assumption that it was Gomer who was the woman throughout.

Then we may ask, what did Hosea know about Gomer when he married her? Some think that he thought that she was a beautiful, pure maiden, and that he found out about her infidelity only after they were married; in that case we would have to put this interpretation upon 1:2: "Go, take unto thee this woman

(whom I now know to have been a wife of whoredoms)" — not a very probable interpretation. Some think that Gomer may have been one of the many religious prostitutes of that day, one who was married to one of the gods and carried on her trade in the name of religion; that is possible, and the fact that that trade was considered honorable by most people of that time may have made the marriage less strange. It may be simply that Hosea took a notorious woman for his wife at the command of God. He seems to have been deeply in love with her and hoped to rescue her from her evil life.

It is quite clear, however, that God wished to use the tragic marital experiences of Hosea to try to show His own love for sinful, faithless Israel. We marvel at a man who would be willing to go as far as Hosea did with such a faithless woman; how much more evil is Israel, and how much more loving is God!

The book falls naturally into two sections:

1. *Unfaithful wives, Gomer and Israel,* 1 - 3. God's love for Israel is like that of Hosea's love for Gomer. He gives her chance after chance to repent. The names of the children of whoredom are symbolic of the punishment that God must visit upon Israel: Jezreel, "I will avenge the blood of Jezreel upon the house of Jehu;" Lo-ruhamah, "for I will no more have mercy upon the house of Israel;" and Lo-ammi, "for ye are not my people."

2. *Miscellaneous prophecies,* 4 - 14. We cannot trace any clear train of thought through this section or see any further outline. At times the text seems to be corrupt and the meaning far from clear. Yet the condemnation of the sins of those troubled times is clear. Hosea thunders against the sins of tottering Israel, as Jeremiah is to thunder against the sins of tottering

Judah a century and a half later. Hosea mentions various sins; yet all the sins of Israel may be considered as the one sin of deserting God. Hosea pleads with his people to turn back to God. He predicts that God will have to send dire punishment upon Israel, but he looks beyond that to a time when God's people will return to Him and He will be able to pour out His merciful bounties upon them.

There is unanimity among scholars of all shades of opinion that the vast majority of the book is the work of Hosea. There are some scholars, however, who believe that there are some interpolations in the book.

It is maintained that those passages which look forward to a time of restoration and blessedness must have been written in late Exilic or post-Exilic times. But surely even an uninspired man would believe that God would not allow His drama to end in tragedy; and an inspired prophet could have God's revelation of His final blessing.

There are some who feel that all the passages which refer to Judah were added later by some one from the Southern Kingdom; but there is no reason whatever why Hosea himself could not have made incidental references to Judah from time to time.

Then there are passages which seem to break the train of thought, which some consider interpolations. But it is just as easy to consider them parentheses, or to admit that we cannot always understand what Hosea meant.

It would be foolish to claim that we know that we have every word of the book just as it left the hand of Hosea; yet we find no conclusive evidence against any one passage in the book. The interpolations alleged should be studied in the light of a good critical interpretation of the details of the book.

XV.

THE BOOK OF ISAIAH

Isaiah's name means "Jehovah is Salvation." He was the son of a certain Amoz, about whom we know nothing. From the fact that he was very intimate with the kings Ahaz and Hezekiah, some have thought that he may have been of royal blood, but that must remain only a conjecture. He was married and had at least two sons (7:3 and 8:1-4). He received his call "in the year that King Uzziah died" (6:1), probably 740 B. C. His ministry extended through the reigns of Jotham and Ahaz and at least into the reign of Hezekiah (about 727-695 B. C.). He lived at least as long as 701 B. C., the time of Sennacherib's campaign against Judah. There is a late tradition (second century A. D.)that Isaiah was sawn asunder in the persecutions which followed the accession of King Manasseh (about 695 B. C.), but that is too late to be given much credence. We can be certain that his work covered the period 740-701 B. C.; it may have lasted somewhat longer.

It is to be noted that Isaiah's ministry is dated by reference only to the Kings of Judah. Isaiah lived in Jerusalem and gave most of his attention to the affairs of the Southern Kingdom. The Northern Kingdom was far gone when Isaiah began his work. In 722 Samaria was to fall before the hordes of Sargon of Assyria, and the Northern Kingdom was to come to an end and to become "The Ten Lost Tribes."

Two other great crises occurred during the time of Isaiah, and many of his prophecies reflect them.

First was the Syro-Ephraimitish war of 735 B. C. The great Assyrian power under Tiglath-pileser had taken on new life and was becoming more and more active in the region of Palestine. Many of the cities of Northern Syria were conquered and made into a province of the Assyrian Empire. Syria and Israel allied themselves together to resist the advances of Assyria. These allies attempted to force Judah, under King Ahaz, to join them. Near-panic seized the people of Judah as the Syro-Ephraimitish army came closer and closer to Jerusalem. One party thought that it would be best to join the allies and oppose the Assyrians; another, that it would be best to seek aid from the Assyrians against the allies. Isaiah urged that neither course be followed but that Judah keep its trust in Jehovah. He probably saw that the attempt of the allies against the Assyrians would be futile, as it actually was; and also that seeking the aid of the Assyrians would mean that Judah would become subservient to them. Ahaz decided to follow the course that seemed most practical and appealed to Tiglath-pileser. The Assyrians defeated the allies and relieved Judah of their danger; but Judah was made a vassal state and obliged to pay tribute to Assyria. This alliance with Assyria was to be the cause of much future trouble for Judah. It is quite probable that if Ahaz had followed Isaiah's advice Assyria would have defeated the allies on her own account; Judah might not have been involved at all, or she could have been in a position of coming to the aid of the Assyrians. Either one of these courses would probably have been far better than what actually took place. The advice of Isaiah came primarily from his intense faith in Jehovah, but it was also based upon a very wise, realistic understanding of all the political factors involved.

When Tiglath-pileser died and was succeeded by Shalmaneser V, Israel sought to rebel against Assyria again, this time with the help of Egypt. Shalmaneser quickly put down this uprising. Two years later another attempt was made. This time Shalmaneser brought in his armies and laid siege to Samaria, which finally fell (722 B. C.) after a terrible period of three years. Shalmaneser died during the siege and was succeeded by Sargon. Sargon destroyed the city and deported its inhabitants. Thus the Kingdom of Israel passes from the pages of history. This great event has little or no reflection in the book of Isaiah. The fall of Israel meant, however, that there was no longer any buffer state between Judah and Assyria. Now Judah was directly between Assyria and the following kingdoms to the north and Egypt to the south.

When Sargon died in 705 B. C., the states that had become subject to Assyria decided that the time was ripe to strike for their freedom. The new king, Sennacherib, took his armies westward and put down one small state after another. The Egyptians were appealed to for help, but they came only to be defeated. Finally Sennacherib gave his attention to King Hezekiah and the Kingdom of Judah. Judah had been seeking help from every quarter, especially from the Egyptians and the rising power, the Babylonians; Isaiah had been pleading against all such attempts and urging dependence upon Jehovah. The Assyrians sent messengers demanding that Hezekiah surrender. Hezekiah went to the Temple to seek the aid of Jehovah and also told Isaiah of his trouble. Isaiah reassured him, telling him that Sennacherib would be called back to Assyria and be slain there. The very same night a great plague swept the camp of the Assyrians, and they retreated from the vicinity of Jerusalem. Many of the prophesies

of Isaiah come from the period of the invasion of Sennacherib, around 701 B. C. Chapters 36-38 give a rather full history of the period. We have a highly similar account of it in II Kings 18:13 - 20:21. We see accounts also in Assyrian sources and in the Greek history of Herodotus (ii 141). The historian has great difficulty harmonizing the details of these accounts, but we cannot enter into that here. It is clear, however, that Sennacherib did withdraw and never came back to trouble Jerusalem, though he lived some twenty years longer.

Isaiah was a spokesman for God rather than a political statesman, but he gave God's messages to the men of his time to meet the conditions of his time. At times he gives us enough information to allow us to date accurately various portions of his book, especially in connection with the Syro-Ephraimitish war and the invasion of Sennacherib. At times we cannot be so sure; some scholars assign portions to one period and others to another. At times there are no chronological hints whatever. When a detailed study of the book is made, the student should seek to get all the light possible by assigning the various sections to their historical occasions whenever possible.

While Isaiah spoke directly to the men of his day, it is not to be thought for a moment that he spoke only to them. His messages are full of great eternal principles as well. At times it is necessary to go below the surface to separate the principle from its temporary application, though often the eternal principles are clearly evident.

Isaiah magnified God. Especially did he emphasize the holiness of God. The vision of God and His holiness that set him to his work never left him. He believed also in the power of God and His ability to protect His

people. Again and again he pleaded with those in positions of authority to refrain from seeking aid from the surrounding nations and to put their trust in Jehovah. Isaiah believed firmly that Jehovah was God of all the universe and that He was back of all that was happening to all the nations.

Because he believed very strongly in the holiness of God, Isaiah was very severe in his condemnation of the sins of the people. He condemned the personal sins and the social sins of his day — and it is striking how similar those sins were to the sins of our day. He was also very critical of mere superficial religious observances when they came from lives that were stained with sin; the forms of religion are worthless unless they go with a true attitude of the soul.

The majesty of the message of Isaiah is reflected in the language and style that he used. He was a literary genius of the highest order. There is little or no formal poetry in the book, but much of the prose is of almost poetic excellence. The book abounds in the use of all kinds of figures of speech which add much to the effectiveness of the messages.

The Unity of the Book

It has been assumed by many that the prophet Isaiah was the author of the whole book as it now stands. Many have made such a belief a test of orthodoxy. Many still defend it on the basis of critical scholarship. Let us see some of the factors involved.

All scholars recognize the fact that when we come to chapter 40 we come into an entirely different attitude and atmosphere. Before this the prophet had been condemning the sins of the people and been predicting punishment for them; he had been looking forward to a period of exile. From chapter 40 on, the book assumes that the people are in exile, and it seeks to encourage

them and prepare them for deliverance from the captivity. The first two verses may be considered the text for the sermon that is preached: "Comfort ye, comfort ye my people, saith your God. Speak ye comfortably to Jerusalem, and cry unto her, that her warfare is accomplished, that her iniquity is pardoned: for she hath received of the Lord's hand double for all her sins." In 586 B. C. Jerusalem had fallen and its inhabitants had been taken as captives to Babylon. They had become settled in the land. Many of them had come to believe that God had given up His interest in them and forgotten His promises to them, and so they had resigned themselves to stay forever in Babylon. This second part of the book of Isaiah was meant to stir up their trust in God, to make them wish to go back to the Holy Land, and to prepare them for going.

There can be no doubt that this latter part of the book is a message directly for the Jews toward the latter part of the Exile. The only question is whether it was written by Isaiah some two centuries before that time or by some unknown prophet of the time of the Exile.

The Conservative believes firmly that it is possible for God to reveal the future to His prophets; so it is not impossible for him to believe that God revealed to Isaiah the course of the Exile and then gave him a message that He knew would be appropriate to the latter days of the Exile. It is quite true that often a prophet will speak as though he were living in a far distant future; he will use past tenses of events that are yet in the future. Yet invariably the message will have a direct application and meaning to the people of the age of the prophet himself. The book of Revelation, for example, frequently gives us glimpses of the last days; yet those glimpses served to give strength

and courage to the persecuted Christians of Asia Minor in the last years of the first century. The Conservative believes that it would have been possible for God to have given this revelation to Isaiah, but he has as much right as anyone else to ask, "Did He give it to Isaiah or not?" The fact that it was very clearly meant for an age two centuries after the time of Isaiah is a very strong reason for thinking that it was produced at that time.

It is a fact, however, that we have no evidence that these two parts ever circulated independently; that is, we have no manuscripts or direct references that separate between the two parts. But our manuscripts and references are not early enough to have much weight in dealing with a question like this. Is it possible to think that anyone would dare add anything to the work of a man like Isaiah? Yes it is. No one need think that Isaiah himself gave the book its final form. There are times when the first person is used in reference to Isaiah and times when it is the third person. There is a long historical section, chapters 36-39, which is almost identical with II Kings 18:13 - 20:19, which may well have been borrowed from Kings and inserted here because of the prominent part played by Isaiah. And it is a definite fact that additions were frequently made to the biblical books, as we can see when we compare the form in which we have them in our Hebrew manuscripts with their form in the Greek translation, the Septuagint; see, for example, how additions were made to the book of Daniel, at the beginning, in the body of the book, and at the end. We today would not do a thing like that without making it plain what was being done, but we must refrain from judging them by our modern literary rules and practices.

Not only is the historical background different, but there is also a marked difference in style between the two sections. Different words are used, and the grammatical structure is somewhat different. Each section has its characteristic phrases that are not found in the other. Long lists of these differences may be found in the critical commentaries and the more detailed introductions.[1] It should be recognized that differences of style are not necessarily conclusive proof of difference of authorship, though it is here at least a strong suggestion. Some think that the different subject matter induced Isaiah to change his style.

There are also certain theological developments that are found in the latter part of the book that are not present in the former — not that one contradicts the other but that one seems to present a further development. There is much more emphasis on the infinitude of God and His relationship to the whole of the universe. The relationship of God to Israel is brought out in different ways, making different emphasis; it is in the second part that we have the marvelous "servant passages," for example. Even when the two parts deal with the same theological truths they frequently use different terminology in their treatment. Here again we fail to find positive proof, but only a strong presumption.

There are, of course, many similarities between the two parts. They could be used to prove the same authorship; they could also be used to show that the second part was written by one who was familiar with the first part.

Some argue that this problem is solved by the fact that certain New Testament writers make quotations from the second part of the book and refer to them as Isaiah's. John the Baptist does in Matt. 3:3, Luke 3:4

(1) E.g., Driver, *Introduction to the Literature of the O. T.*, pp. 238-242.

and John 1:23. Matthew does in 8:17 and 12:18-21. John does in 12:38. And Paul does in Rom. 10:16 and 10:20-21. It is certain that the book of Isaiah was in its present form in the first Christian century; even the Septuagint of the second century B. C. had it as we now have it. And the book was known as the book of Isaiah, though the title of the book need have nothing to do with authorship; many books were called by their first word, and others by the name of their prominent heroes. Nowhere do we find New Testament writers going into matters of technical introduction; they had far more important matters with which to deal. It is quite in harmony with Conservative scholarship to believe that all of these quotations may mean simply that they were made from the book which was then circulating under the name of the prophet Isaiah, though some will still believe that they mean that God has spoken authoritatively as to the authorship of the second part of Isaiah.

Some scholars make much of the fact that the second part shows little familiarity with the land and customs of the Babylonians. However, a writer who knew these things may not have seen fit to refer to them. This is an argument from silence — and from a silence which is not very significant.

In Isaiah 44:28 and 45:1, Cyrus is mentioned by name. Cyrus was coming upon the scene in the latter years of the Exile and was to be used as God's instrument in allowing the return of the Exiles. It would have been strange, though not absolutely impossible, for Isaiah to have referred to Cyrus by name two centuries before he came upon the scene.

It would be wise to refrain from dogmatism in regard to a matter so complicated as this. This matter should not be made a test of orthodoxy; one can hold a very

high view of inspiration and still believe that Isaiah did not write the latter part of the book that now bears his name. Many Conservative scholars will continue to believe in the unity of the book, while many other scholars, equally Conservative, will not. It should be recognized clearly, however, that those Conservatives who believe in the theory of two Isaiahs believe that both parts of the book contain true predictions of coming events, especially of the coming of the Messiah and of the final triumph of the Kingdom of God.

Whoever wrote this second part of Isaiah, all scholars recognize that it contains some of the most important and sublime truths in all Scripture. The author was just as much inspired as the author of any book who is now known by name or as the authors of the many books that are now unknown. Especially fine are the well-known passages describing the Suffering Servant of Jehovah, Israel and Israel's Greatest Son Himself.

Many scholars who believe in a Deutero-Isaiah or Second Isaiah also believe that there are other portions of the present book that were not produced by Isaiah himself but by the Second Isaiah or some other unknown person. More radical scholars leave very little even of chapters 1-39 for Isaiah, and some take out certain parts of the latter part from Second Isaiah.

The reasons alleged for these passages being later insertions are taken from the historical background in every case. It is asserted that certain passages do not reflect the time of Isaiah but another later time. The Conservative who believes in the possibility of a Second Isaiah should have no a priori reason for believing in the impossibility of later insertions. The matter becomes one of detailed interpretation of the various passages and reconstructing the history of the times. Certain scholars have been unnecessarily extreme in

their criticism. We should remember that we do not know all about the history of those times; possibly we could fit more passages into Isaiah's time if we knew more about it.

The passages that more reasonable critics tend to date later than the time of Isaiah are 24-27, 34-35, the historical appendix of chapters 36-39 and the work of Second Isaiah. Some posit a Third Isaiah for chapters 56-66, but that theory has not become very popular.

An Outline of the Contents

1. *Prophecies concerning Judah and Jerusalem,* 1 - 12.

2. *Prophecies concerning foreign nations,* 13 - 23. Babylon, Assyria, Philistia, Moab, Damascus, Ethiopia, Egypt, Dumah, Arabia and Tyre are singled out by name.

3. *Prophecy of a great world-judgment,* 24 - 27.

4. *Prophecies concerning Judah in her relations with Assyria,* 28-33. All of these begin with "Woe to . . . "

5. *Prophecy of the redemption and return of Israel,* 34 - 35.

6. *Historical appendix concerning Sennacherib's invasion,* 36 - 39.

7. *Israel's restoration from the Babylonian exile,* 40-66.

XVI.

THE BOOK OF MICAH

The meaning of the word Micah is "Who is like Jehovah?" Micah was a native of Moresheth, probably the same as the Moresheth-gath which he mentioned in 1:14. Gath was one of the cities of the Philistines; its exact location is not known, but it seems to have been close to the borders of Judah. Moresheth-gath may have received its name from being close to Gath or from being in some way dependent upon it; it is mentioned in connection with places in Judah, and so it was probably in Judah near the border toward the Philistines. Micah was not from a great city, like his contemporary Isaiah; his interests were those of the country and of individuals rather than matters of national and international import.

The prophecies of Micah are dated (1:1) during the reigns of Jotham, Ahaz and Hezekiah, kings of Judah. That would take us from about 740 to 698 B. C. Therefore Micah and Isaiah lived at just about the same time; Isaiah may have started his work a bit earlier, as he received his vision in the year that Uzziah died and Jotham became king. It will be unnecessary to review the history of that time as we have just been over it in connection with our study of Isaiah.

Micah lived in the Southern Kingdom and gave most of his attention to it. He does condemn the Northern Kingdom at times, however, and he lived to see its downfall in 722 B. C.

Micah condemned with fiery earnestness the sins of the Jews of his day, especially of those leaders of the people who lived in the two capital cities, Jerusalem and Samaria. He is very severe with the wealthy, grasp-

ing people who grew rich by crushing their weaker neighbors. He gives particular attention to the special sins of the rulers, the judges, the priests and even the prophets, accusing them all of being mercenary and timeserving. He predicts that God will send His punishment upon His people for their many sins. He is preeminently a prophet demanding social justice and true morality rather than the superficial forms of ceremonial religion. Micah 6:8 may be considered one of the high points in all the prophetic literature: "He hath shewed thee, O man, what is good; and what doth the Lord require of thee, but to do justly, and to love mercy, and to walk humbly with thy God?"

The Integrity of the Book

It is generally agreed that chapters 1-3 form a continuous unit and have all the marks of having come from Micah. Only a few scholars suggest that there may possibly be a few minor interpolations in this section, such as 2:12-13 and 1:2-4.

Some scholars object to chapters 4 and 5 being considered as Micah's. These two chapters look down into the future, at times into the far-distant future, and predict a time when the gracious promises of God would be fulfilled to His people. This is in striking contrast to condemnations of the first section and also with what is to follow in the last two chapters. The case against these two chapters is somewhat like that against the latter part of Isaiah, though it is not nearly so clear. It is possible, of course, that some later, unknown prophet produced these chapters and they were placed beside the condemnations of Micah to supplement them. It is just as possible, however, to believe that Micah himself was responsible for them, and that he used the picture of the glorious future to try to call the sinful people of his day back to their God and to true holiness

so that they could look forward to sharing in that great day. Some critics object to the mention of Babylon in 4:10, as Assyria was the hostile power of Micah's day; one who believes in the possibility of predictive prophecy is not moved much by that argument. Certain historical allusions may seem a bit difficult to harmonize with what we know of Micah's time; but the difficulty may be with our lack of knowledge of those times.

Chapters 6 and 7 continue the line of thought of chapters 1-3. Some few scholars believe that because of the added severity of the tone they must have come from a somewhat later time when conditions had grown even worse than they were in the time of Micah, such as in the time of Manasseh, after Hezekiah. That is almost certainly splitting hairs a bit too finely. Some critics say that 7:7-20 was written in Exilic times for about the same reasons that they assign chapters 3 and 4 to those times.

All scholars recognize a certain jerkiness in the present form of the book of Micah. That is probably due to the putting together by himself or his editor of prophecies uttered on different occasions on various subjects. We should not say that it was impossible that the work of other prophets could have been included with his, though the evidence is far from convincing. Fortunately, the obtaining of the messages for our times from Micah depends to a very small extent upon any theory of the unity or lack of unity of the book.

An Outline of the Contents

The three main divisions are rather clear:

1. *Judgment upon Israel and Judah for their sins,* 1 - 3.
2. *A glorious future in store for God's children,* 4-5.
4. *More reproofs and another glimpse of the time of blessedness,* 6 - 7.

XVII.

THE BOOK OF JEREMIAH

The meaning of the name Jeremiah is probably, "Whom Jehovah establishes." Jeremiah was "the son of Hilkiah, of the priests that were in Anathoth in the land of Benjamin" (1:1). Anathoth was a town about three miles northeast of Jerusalem that had been assigned to the priests in Joshua 21:18. Living very close to Jerusalem, Jeremiah had easy access to the capital city. The fact that he belonged to a priestly family made contact with the Temple and even the court possible.

In the first chapter we have the record of the call of Jeremiah to be a prophet. It came to him while he was still a youth, and he hesitated to answer it. He was warned of some of the difficulties which he would have to face: "And they shall fight against thee; but they shall not prevail against thee; for I am with thee, saith the Lord, to deliver thee." So with that warning and that promise, Jeremiah gave heed to God's call. And his long life certainly fulfilled both the warning and the promise.

The activity of Jeremiah is dated in 1:2-3 from the thirteenth year of the reign of Josiah, through the reign of Jehoiakim, to the eleventh year of the reign of Zedekiah; that is, about 626-586 B. C. He did not mention Jehoahaz, who reigned after Josiah, and Jehoiachin, who reigned after Jehoiakim. This dating takes us to the time of the destruction of Jerusalem and the carrying of its inhabitants to Babylon. Jeremiah, however, went with some of the Jews to Egypt (chapters 43-44),

and he spent the last years of his life there. The date of his death is unknown.

Jeremiah received his call to become a prophet at about the time that the Scythian raiders were terrifying the peoples in the vicinity of Palestine. He, like Zephaniah, seems to have been influenced by this background. In condemning the sins of the Jews, he warned them that God was going to send punishment upon them which would come from a nation to the north. Some scholars think that Jeremiah identified that punishing nation as the Scythians, and that when they failed to come in and destroy the Israelites, Jeremiah himself was discredited as a false prophet. This theory is used to explain the fact that Jeremiah was not consulted in connection with the reformation of 621 under Josiah,[1] and the fact that there seems to have been a long period of silence after the early prophecies before Jeremiah dared to speak the Word of the Lord in public again. In holding this theory it is necessary to believe that the prophecies were later edited in such a way as to remove references to the Scythians and make them applicable to other northern nations, the Assyrians and Babylonians. The theory has very attractive points, though it can be considered only a theory. At any rate the Scythians did not prove to be God's instrument of punishment, but Jeremiah was to live long enough to see the punishment come from another northern nation.

After the death of Ashurbanipal, about 626 B. C., the great Assyrian Empire began to deteriorate rapidly. Assyria could not keep the Scythians from sweeping down over her western provinces. In 612 B. C. the Babylonians brought about the fall of Nineveh, the capital of the Assyrian Empire, and the Assyrians had to retire to Harran. In 608 Pharaoh Necho came through

(1) Instead, an otherwise unknown prophetess, Huldah, was called upon to pass upon the new code, II Kings 22:12-20.

Palestine to Assyria, probably in an attempt to aid the Assyrians against the rising power of the Babylonians. At Megiddo, Pharaoh Necho met and killed King Josiah; it is not clear as to whether there was a battle there or whether Necho killed Josiah to avoid having an enemy at his back as he went north. The Jewish people placed Jehoahaz on the throne, but Necho dethroned him and held him captive, making Jehoiakim king instead and placing a heavy burden of tribute upon the Jews.(1) But in 605 B. C. the new power, Babylon, became triumphant over both Assyria and Egypt when King Nebuchadnezzar won the battle of Carchemish and became master of all western Asia. Judah also became subject to Nebuchadnezzar. After three years of subjection, Jehoiakim attempted to rebel against Nebuchadnezzar, probably at the instigation of Egypt. But the Babylonians were entirely too strong; they came in and filled the city of Jerusalem with blood.(2) This was the beginning of the end for Jerusalem.

After the death of Jehoiakim, Jehoiachin, his son, became king. Nebuchadnezzar himself appears upon the scene and lays siege to Jerusalem. After three months, in 597 B. C., the city fell, and the king and the leaders of the people were deported to Babylon.

Zedekiah became king of Judah in place of Jehoiachin. For a time he submitted to the Babylonians. In his fourth year, however, delegates from Moab, Ammon, Tyre and Sidon came to Jerusalem to arrange for an uprising and a stroke for freedom. Jeremiah protested against what he knew would be a suicidal attempt, but without avail. Zedekiah joined the revolt and was soon confronted by the army of Babylon. II Kings 25 and Jeremiah 39 tell the story of the terrible siege of Jerusalem, its complete destruction and the deportation of the

(1) II Kings 23:29-35.
(2) II Kings 24:1-4.

rest of the people, including King Zedekiah, to Babylon. This took place in 586 B. C. Zedekiah had to see his two sons killed, and then his own eyes were put out.

Jeremiah and a few of the poorer Jews were left in the ruins of Jerusalem under the governorship of Gedaliah, who had been appointed by the Babylonians. For a time there was quiet submission on the part of the remaining Jews. Then another ill-fated uprising took place. Some of the Jews murdered Gedaliah, but instead of winning their freedom from Babylon they had to flee for safety to Egypt. So they go to Tahpanhes, taking Jeremiah with them; and there the curtain falls upon this great prophet.[1]

The life of Jeremiah reflects the tragedy of the times in which he lived. He received his call at about the time that the Scythian terror was coming toward the land. He condemned vehemently the sins of the people and warned that God would punish them, possibly intimating that the punishment would come at the hands of the Scythians.

The Scythian threat passed, and Jeremiah may have been discredited in the eyes of the people. But his preaching may well have been influential in preparing the way for the reforms under Josiah in 621. Jeremiah was not consulted about the new-found Book of the Law, and there are no parts of the book of Jeremiah that can be definitely dated at the time of the reform. Jeremiah doubtless approved the reformation and probably felt that it was unnecessary to continue his messages of denunciation for a time.

But the reformation only stayed the necessity for punishment for a time. Soon the people were interested in the political strifes of the region, the good king Josiah was killed and the people sank back into their

(1) Cf. Jeremiah 40-44 and II Kings 25:22-26.

sins. Under Jehoiakim, Jeremiah came forth with one denunciation and prediction of doom after another. Jeremiah had his scribe, Baruch, write a whole roll of prophecies and read them to the court and the King; the King cut the roll to pieces and consigned it to the fire.[1] From that time on Jeremiah was in constant danger of his life. At times he was in hiding. He was beaten and put into the stocks. He was imprisoned under Zedekiah during the siege of Jerusalem. After the fall of the city, Jeremiah was allowed to remain under the protection of Gedaliah. After the murder of Gedaliah, Jeremiah was taken by the Jews as they fled to Egypt.

It was Jeremiah's tragic fate to come upon the scene at one of the blackest times of Jewish history. As the messenger of God, it fell to his lot to condemn the manifold sins of his people and to predict that God would certainly punish His people for their sins. He incurred the enmity of practically all the people. Even the priests and other prophets were corrupt; they opposed Jeremiah and said that all was well and that God would surely save and protect His people and His holy city. But history has proved that Jeremiah was right and the other prophets wrong.

The sins condemned were individual and social sins of all kinds. Many of them were connected with the pagan cults of the day which were exerting a very strong influence upon the Jews. Jeremiah pleaded with the rulers and the people to avoid entangling alliances with foreign nations. These alliances showed a lack of trust in Jehovah. They also paved the way for the influx of pagan religious rites, as one nation had to treat respectfully the gods of its allies.

While the dominant note of Jeremiah is one of condemnation and doom, yet the book is not without its

(1) Jer. 36.

passages of trust and hope. Especially in 31:31-34 does Jeremiah look forward to a better day: "Behold, the days come, saith the Lord, that I will make a new covenant with the house of Israel, and with the house of Judah . . . I will put my law in their inward parts, and write it in their hearts; and will be their God, and they shall be my people . . . I will forgive their iniquity, and I will remember their sin no more." He predicted the Exile, but also that there would be a restoration after the Exile. He even looked forward to the coming of the Messiah and the messianic reign: "Behold, the days come, saith the Lord, that I will raise unto David a righteous Branch, and a King shall reign and prosper, and shall execute judgment and justice in the earth."(1)

The question of the original text of Jeremiah is an exceedingly difficult one. The Septuagint differs widely from the Hebrew text at times. The prophecies concerning the foreign nations in chapters 46-51 are placed after 25:13 in the Greek, and they are also arranged differently. The section 33:14-26 is not in the Greek at all. In many passages the Greek is somewhat shorter than our Hebrew. The Greek text of the whole book is approximately an eighth shorter than the Hebrew. This problem is largely one of textual criticism, but it also has bearing upon the field of historical criticism as well. It shows that in different places and at different times different forms of the book were in circulation. It is clear evidence that the ancients did at times change the original form of the biblical books, whether we consider the Hebrew or the Greek a better approximation to the original.

The Composition of the Book

It is clear that the book as we now have it is the product of at least several stages of composition. The

(1) 23:5. Cf. also 30:4-11 and 33:14-26.

book itself tells of several stages. Jeremiah dictated to Baruch, his scribe, all of his prophecies down to the fourth year of Jehoiakim, which would cover about half of his ministry. This roll was cut to pieces and burned by the King. Then Jeremiah dictated another roll, adding to it many similar words.[1] But this second roll cannot be considered our present book because many of the prophecies are clearly dated as later than that time. Chapter 52 seems clearly to have been a later historical appendix, not written by Jeremiah himself.[2] The various prophecies of the book are not arranged in a chronological order, whether we take the Hebrew or the Greek as the original form; many of the sections are definitely dated and many others can be assigned to their periods rather accurately.

There are some critics who assign certain sections of Jeremiah to Exilic or post-Exilic times, especially those that predict a bright future for at least some of the Jewish people. One such passage, 33:14-26, is not in the Septuagint; so there is some definite external evidence that it may not have been original. It is possible that it and other passages may have been added later to show another side of God's dealings with His people; yet it is just as possible to believe that Jeremiah himself had those prophetic insights and saw a few gleams of sunlight coming through the dark clouds. Each supposed interpolation should be carefully studied on its own merits by the student who seeks to make a detailed study of the book.

It must be admitted that we cannot be certain of all the steps through which the book went. We know of the dictation of two rolls to Baruch. Many other dated prophecies are scattered through the book in no definite chronological order. We know that someone must have

(1) Jer. 36.
(2) It is almost identical with II Kings 24:18-25:30 and was probably taken from it.

collected the various available prophecies of Jeremiah and put them together, adding at times historical incidents relating to Jeremiah and his times. We cannot tell why he arranged the book as he did. It is clear also that the work of the original editor, or editors, was not considered final, because we have two widely different forms surviving in the Septuagint and in the Massoretic Hebrew.

While many such matters of detail have not been solved, and probably can never be solved, it is generally agreed that the vast majority of the contents of the book is the work of Jeremiah and gives us a most accurate and full account of the personality of Jeremiah, of the times in which he lived and of God's messages for those times.

An Outline of the Contents

In the light of what has already been said we must not expect a chronological outline; nor can any outline be considered the work of Jeremiah himself.

1. *Prophecies concerning Judah before the fall of Jerusalem,* 1-38.
2. *History and prophecy concerning Judah after the fall of Jerusalem,* 39-45.
3. *Prophecies concerning the Gentile nations,* 46-51.
4. *Historical appendix concerning the deportation to Babylon,* 52.

XVIII.

THE BOOK OF ZEPHANIAH

The name Zephaniah means "He whom Jehovah has protected." Zephaniah was the son of Cushi, the son of Gedaliah, the son of Amariah, the son of Hizkiah. The fact that many generations are named makes it probable that the Hizkiah, or Hezekiah, named last was a famous man, probably the King Hezekiah, who reigned from about 727 to 698 B. C. There is good time for the intervening generations. Zephaniah may well have been of royal blood and have been an intimate of King Josiah. We are not told where Zephaniah lived, but from the contents of the book it is probable that it was Jerusalem.

The prophecy is dated "in the days of Josiah the son of Amon, king of Judah" (1:1). Josiah reigned from about 639 to 608 B. C. We should remember the great reform that took place during the reign of Josiah in 621 when the Book of the Law was discovered in the Temple. As the moral condition of the people as pictured in the book of Zephaniah shows no sign of this reform, it is generally agreed that Zephaniah is to be dated before that time. The book of Zephaniah and Zephaniah himself may well have been in a measure responsible for bringing about that great reform movement.

The terrible picture of the punishment of the day of the Lord and its use of the horrors of warfare make it probable that there was a military foe threatening Judah at the time. The Greek historian Herodotus (i. 105) gives a description of the invasion of the Scythian hordes. They swept over the Assyrian Empire and down into Palestine, where the Egyptian King Psammetichus

"met them with gifts and prayers, and prevailed on them to advance no further." The fright occasioned by the approach of the devastating Scythians may have been the background for Zephaniah, though there are some students who doubt that; some even doubt the truth of Herodotus' story completely. The invasion of the Scythians is to be dated about 630 B. C. The date of the book of Zephaniah cannot be far from 630-621 B. C.

Zephaniah condemned with terrific force the sins of his day and predicted the coming of the Day of the Lord to punish men and nations for their sins. The book closes with a brighter note; that day will also bring blessedness for those who are true to God and His way of life. The description of the terror of that day is one of the strongest passages in all prophetic literature. While it is not a pleasant picture, it is one which all men who are continuing in their sins ought to have clearly before their minds.

Some critics suppose that Zephaniah expected the Scythians to come in and destroy Judah and thus bring in that day of wrath, and they use this as an example of a prediction that was belied by subsequent history. But the simple truth is that Zephaniah never identified the Day of the Lord with the Scythians or any other enemies. God may use nations from time to time to punish His people, but the great day of eternal punishment is yet in the future.

The list of sins condemned by Zephaniah gives a graphic picture of the degradation of the times, coming from the influence of the reactionary times of Manasseh. They included the worship of the Baalim, sun-worship, idolatry and more or less complete apostasy from Jehovah. Along with these religious matters he joined social injustice by the rich, lack of justice on the part

of the judges, the adoption of foreign dress and the complete lack of true religion on the part of the priests and the prophets of the day.

The Integrity of the Book

Certain scholars do not believe that Zephaniah wrote a few portions of the present book. Some few object to parts of chapter two. More object to chapter three. The last verses, 3:14-20, have been most severely attacked because they present a picture of a time of great blessedness, in very striking contrast to the general tone of the judgment which pervades the book. Many feel that this would be out of place in the preaching of Zephaniah but would be appropriate to the latter years of the Exile, thus being parallel to the message of the second part of Isaiah. Others feel that it is entirely fitting for the same prophet to see the bright side of the future for those who repent and believe, even while he must emphasize the dark side for those who were in the midst of their sins.

An Outline of the Contents

1. *Judgment upon Judah,* 1.
2. *Judgment upon foreign nations,* 2:1-3:7.
3. *The blessed side of the Day of the Lord,* 3:8-20.

XIX.

THE BOOK OF NAHUM

The name Nahum means "compassionate." The prophecy of Nahum is a short one dealing with one definite theme, the prediction of the destruction of Nineveh.

The date of Nahum is easy to fix between two limits. 3:8-10 refers to the fall of No-amon, or Thebes, which took place in 663 B. C. The book predicts the fall of Nineveh, which took place in 612 B. C. The book must have been written some time between those two dates. A closer dating must be only theoretical. It is possible that Nahum saw the enemies of Nineveh becoming more and more powerful and foresaw that the destruction was certain, in which case the book was produced not long before 612.

We know nothing about Nahum himself. 1:1 calls him "the Elkoshite," but the location of Elkosh is uncertain; probably the best theory is the one which places it south of Jerusalem, between it and Gaza, though there are other traditions that place it in Galilee and also near Nineveh itself.

Nahum lived during the time of Jeremiah, but his theme was quite different from that of Jeremiah. Jeremiah was primarily interested in the sins of the children of Israel and the doom that was in store for them. Nahum, however, dealt with the great enemy of the Jews, the Assyrians, and predicted that that great power would come to an end. He described the sins of the capital, Nineveh, and its overthrow in the most vivid language. Many scholars believe that Nahum is second only to Isaiah in the grandeur of his style.

The second and third chapters speak directly of Nineveh and the Assyrians, while chapter 1 is of a general nature. Some scholars think that 1:2-2:2 was originally an alphabetic psalm which was composed later than the time of Nahum and prefaced to the book to give it a more general application. It is true that it is easy to see an alphabetic arrangement as far as 1:10; it is possible that the rest may at one time have been alphabetically arranged. But it is quite possible that Nahum himself may well have composed an alphabetic psalm, and that he himself spoke in general terms first and then made a specific application to the Assyrians.

We may suggest the following brief outline of the contents:

1. *The majesty of God; His goodness to His people and His severity against their enemies,* 1.
2. *The destruction of the Assyrians predicted,* 2-3.

XX.

THE BOOK OF HABAKKUK

The meaning of the word Habakkuk is uncertain; it is possible that it means "embraced." Nothing whatever is known about Habakkuk other than that he was a prophet. Some have thought that he was probably a Levite and a member of the Temple choir because of the liturgical character of the psalm in chapter three, but that can be considered only an unproved possibility.

The book does not carry a date, but the historical situation back of the book makes clear a rather definite time. The section 1:5-11 implies clearly a date during the rise of the Chaldeans, or Babylonians, to power. No longer are the Assyrians to be looked upon as the enemies who are to punish the Jews for their sins, but the Babylonians. However, the punishment of the Babylonians is still in the future. Let us remember that the Babylonians captured Nineveh in 612 B. C. and finally broke the power of the Assyrians at the battle of Carchemish in 605 B. C. Then the Babylonians came into Palestine and captured Jerusalem in 597, finally destroying it in 586. Thus the extreme limits for the date of the book would be between 612 and 586 B. C., with a rather high degree of probability that it was between 605 and 597. Habakkuk thus prophesied just a bit later than Nahum; his work was contemporaneous with the latter part of the work of Jeremiah.

Jehoiakim was the king upon the throne. The influence of the reform under the good king Josiah had largely vanished. The people were sinking into more and more sins. As a spokesman for God, Habakkuk felt called upon to denounce those sins. He was certain that

God would have to punish His people for those sins. It was revealed to him that the instrument of punishment in this case would be the Chaldeans. But a tremendous problem presented itself to Habakkuk. As the punishing nation grew closer and closer it became clearer and clearer to Habakkuk that the sins of the Chaldeans were even greater than those of Israel. What could it all mean? Would not conditions become even worse when the Chaldeans defeated the Jews? In great perplexity the prophet goes to his tower to wait for an answer from God. And the answer comes (2:2-4): "Write the vision, and make it plain upon tables, that he may run that readeth it. For the vision is yet for an appointed time, but at the end it shall speak, and not lie: though it tarry, wait for it; because it will surely come, it will not tarry. Behold, his soul which is lifted up is not upright in him: but the just shall live by his faith." The eternal principles will surely stand. It may take a long time for God to work out His purposes, but we may be sure that in His own good time His will will surely be done. God is definitely on the side of righteousness, and "the just shall live by his faith." Habakkuk was urged to have that kind of faith and to proclaim it to Israel. God did have to punish His people because they would not turn away from their sins. He used the Babylonians and the Babylonian captivity as a means of punishment, discipline and training for His people. Then the Babylonians received the punishment that was their due, fading out of the picture of history before the strength of the Medes and Persians. Surely the voice of Habakkuk needs to be heard in times like ours.

Chapter three is definitely different from the first two chapters. It is entitled, "A prayer of Habakkuk the prophet upon Shigionoth." It is in the literary form

of one of the psalms of prayer. Some scholars feel that the different literary form and the fact that it is more general in application than the first two chapters prove that it was not the work of Habakkuk but of someone else at a later time; it was added to Habakkuk by a later editor who felt that it was appropriate to the spirit of Habakkuk. That is a possible theory but by no means a necessary one. Habakkuk, whether or not he was a Levite, may well have been capable of composing such a psalm himself; and he could speak in general terms or in very specific terms as he felt the occasion demanded.

Some scholars object to certain other small portions of the book because they cannot fit them into the times as they understand them. But there is little uniformity in these objections, and no scholar should feel that he knows all about these times. The argument from silence must always be handled with great care.

The contents of the book may be outlined thus:

1. *The problem of the Jews and the Chaldeans,* 1-2.
   a. The sins of the Jews, 1:1-4.
   b. Punishment to come from the Chaldeans, 1:5-11.
   c. The Chaldeans worse than the Jews, 1:12-17.
   d. God's answer to the problem, 2:1-4.
   e. All sinners to be punished, 2:5-20.
2. *A psalm of prayer,* 3.

XXI.

THE BOOK OF EZEKIEL

The word Ezekiel comes most directly from the Vulgate form; the somewhat fuller Hebrew form means "God is strong," or "God strengthens."

Before we go further into an introduction to the book, it would be well to discuss briefly the question of the authenticity and integrity of the book as it now stands.

Until most recently it had been believed by virtually all critics, even the most radical, that the book in its present form came from Ezekiel himself, and that the historical picture of Ezekiel in the book is a thoroughly trustworthy one.

In the last ten years, however, a considerable body of literature has been produced denying the truth of the traditional view.[1] Some scholars think that some of the work of Ezekiel should be placed in Jerusalem instead of having it all in Babylonia. Some think that all that can be considered as coming from Ezekiel is that which can be shown to be in poetic form, which is only a very small part of the present book. Some think that the original work of Ezekiel was added to by someone in the time of the later Diaspora who tried to show that Ezekiel had predicted it and also a return from it; besides the more comforting voice from the Diaspora there was a harsher one who continued to criticize the sins of those in the Diaspora. Some think that they can identify small bits of the genuine work of Ezekiel, and that these small bits were used as the text for pious sermons from that time on, coming down very close to Christian times. And so the theories go on.

(1) For a brief survey and fuller bibliography, cf. *The Prophets and Their Times*, J. M. P. Smith, revised edition by W. A. Irwin, Univ. of Chicago Press, 1941, pp. 196-216.

As yet there is entirely too little agreement among these extremely radical theories. The criteria on which they base their conclusions are entirely too subjective. It is possible that further work may result in reaching conclusions that are more uniform and that can be considered to have some high degree of probability. The technical student of Ezekiel must be aware of the new theories as they are propounded. Meanwhile we would do well to adhere closely to the older view of the book.

Ezekiel was the son of Buzi, about whom nothing is known. He was a priest, but he had a vision that set him apart to the work of a prophet. Ezekiel had been carried to Babylonia at the time of the first deportation in 597 B. C. along with many of the aristocracy. He lived, with his wife, in the Jewish colony at Tel Abib on the banks of the Chebar, one of the canals tributary to the Euphrates River.

It is not certain what is meant by the "thirtieth year" of 1:1, but enough clear dates are given to enable us to date the various parts of the book very accurately. His call to be a prophet came "in the fifth year of king Jehoiachin's captivity" (1:2); i.e., 592 B. C. From that time on many of his prophecies are dated accurately. The last dated prophecy (29:17) was in the twenty-seventh year of the captivity; i.e., 570 B. C. So the prophetic ministry of Ezekiel covered at least the years 592-570 B. C. Ezekiel almost certainly had heard Jeremiah; Ezekiel's early ministry was contemporaneous with the later ministry of Jeremiah, though Ezekiel was in Babylon, while Jeremiah stayed in Jerusalem until after the second deportation of 586.

When the king and aristocrats were deported in 597 they were allowed to settle down in Babylonia. They were heartbroken that they had been taken away from

their own land and people, and they needed to be comforted. They had been taken away from the Temple of Jehovah, and so they needed to be shown how they could worship Him in a foreign land. They had been taken into captivity because of their sins, and they needed to have those sins kept before them until they repented of them. They were still interested in the fate of the city of Jerusalem and the people who had not been deported. Ezekiel's work before the fall of Jerusalem sought to meet these needs. He was in Babylonia himself and he gave most of his attention to those who were there with him, but he spent at least some of his time in warning the Jews of Jerusalem, urging them to repent of their sins and predicting certain destruction of the city if they did not.

Then Jerusalem was destroyed and the rest of its inhabitants taken to Babylon. Ezekiel then could give his full attention to the captives. He still sought to give them the comfort of God. He still sought to teach them how to worship God away from the Temple. He sought to keep them from becoming too well satisfied in Babylon. The Jews received rather kind treatment there. Many of them became very prosperous, and some of them obtained high positions in the court. Ezekiel, however, held before them the idea of a restoration to the Holy Land and of a rebuilding of the Temple; he urged them to believe that God still had a glorious future for His people.

The work of Ezekiel is distinctive in several respects.

Ezekiel was primarily a writing, rather than a preaching, prophet. The book as it stands shows us the definite plan of composition of the prophet.

Ezekiel was the first of the prophets to use the literary form of the apocalypse, a form which came to be very popular in later Judaism and which survived into

Christian times, producing one of the canonical books of the New Testament. The book of Ezekiel exerted a great influence upon the other apocalypses that followed. A student of any apocalypse must be familiar with that literary form; he must recognize the great use of figurative language and learn how to get from it the meaning that the original author meant for him to get. If we seek to transfer the pictures of Ezekiel to canvas they become grotesque because he meant them to be word pictures. If we seek to take everything in Ezekiel literally we shall often make nonsense of the book because he purposely used many figures of speech. The student of Ezekiel needs to be especially careful in dealing with the elements of the literary context of the book.

Ezekiel also exerted a great influence upon later Judaism by his emphasis on legalistic ritualism. He drew the picture of the restored Temple and its ritual in great detail, and it served as a great incentive to the captives to go back one day and rebuild such a temple and restore such a ritual. Ezekiel knew that ritual was secondary in importance to the essentials of a true, inward religion, and he denounced sin and held up high spiritual ideals. We must not blame him if the Jews later came to substitute ritual for inward piety. Matters of ritual begin to occupy a prominent place in the prophets with the time of Ezekiel. Scholars who hold to the documentary hypothesis of the Pentateuch feel that Ezekiel was the father of the school which produced the priestly writings. Many scholars consider Ezekiel the father of later Judaism.

The book can be outlined easily in accordance with the prophet's plan:

1. *Prophecies for the Jews before the fall of Jerusalem,* 1-24.

a. In the fifth year (dating from the first deportation of 597), 1-7.
b. In the sixth year, 8-19.
c. In the seventh year, 20-22.
d. In the ninth year, 24.

2. *Prophecies against foreign nations,* 25-32.
   a. In the ninth year, 25.
   b. In the eleventh year, 26-28.
   c. In the tenth, twenty-seventh, eleventh and twelfth years, 29-32 (against the two great enemies, Assyria and Egypt, one of whom had already fallen).
3. *Prophecies of a glorious future for the Jews,* 33-48.
   a. In the twelfth year, 33-39.
   b. In the twenty-fifth year, 40-48.

The text of Ezekiel at times presents great difficulties. The Massoretic Hebrew frequently differs from the Septuagint. Readings from both the Hebrew and Greek must be given due consideration and tested by the rules of internal evidence; at times conjectural emendations seem to be called for, but they must always be used with care.

XXII.

THE BOOK OF HAGGAI

The word Haggai means "festal"; it is possible that Haggai received the name because of having been born on a festival day. Nothing is known of Haggai himself. Some have thought that 2:3 makes probable the view that Haggai was an old man at the time of his prophecy and that he had seen the temple of Solomon before it was destroyed in 586 B. C.; that is not, however, a necessary interpretation.

We have definite chronological notes in Haggai that enable us to date the book in the year 520 B. C.; even the month and the day of the month are given for the various prophecies. All of the prophecies were dated in the second year of the reign of Darius, who was Darius Hystaspis who reigned from 521 to 485 B. C.

The Jews had been taken into captivity by the Chaldeans, or Babylonians, under King Nebuchadnezzar, who reigned from 605 to 562 B. C. After his death the Chaldean power rapidly sank, and that of the Medes and Persians rose. Finally, in 538, the citadel of Babylon itself fell into the hands of Cyrus. In the same year Cyrus issued an edict permitting the return home of all the captive peoples, including, of course, the Jews.[1] Although the permission was granted, there was no great rush on the part of the Jews to avail themselves of the privilege, as they had become too thoroughly at home in the east and did not care to leave the comparative ease and prosperity there to make the long, dangerous journey to the desolate city of Jerusalem.

(1) Cf. Ezra 1:1; II Chron. 36:22f. We have parallel records of Cyrus' kind treatment of captured nations in his own words and in those of Herodotus and Xenophon.

Some, however, did go, and they undertook to rebuild the city and its Temple. They began by building an altar to God and offering sacrifices to Him. Before their preparations for rebuilding the Temple had gone very far, trouble came from the Samaritans. They had offered to help in the building, but the offer had been contemptuously refused, as the Jews considered them a mongrel race with a polluted religion. The Samaritans complained to Cyrus and succeeded in hindering the work until Darius came to the throne in 521. The Jews had become discouraged and indifferent about the building of the Temple, but they were building ceiled houses for themselves. When Darius became king he had to give his attention to internal revolts; Haggai and his contemporary, Zechariah, felt that the time was ripe to complete the work on the Temple on which little or no work had been done for nearly twenty years. The two prophets urged Zerubbabel, the governor of Judah and the heir to the throne of David, and the high priest Joshua to lead the people in this undertaking. Zerubbabel and Joshua accepted the challenge, and the work was begun again. In four and a half years the Temple was completed.(1)

The prophecy of Haggai comes at the very definite time when he and Zechariah urged the Jews and their leaders to undertake again the building of the Temple. The work of Haggai is confined to the one specific purpose of encouraging the building of the Temple. The messages are delivered in very clear, simple language. Thus the time, the occasion and the interpretation of the book are very clear, and we have an intimate, first-hand account of the post-Exilic Jews at a very critical time in their history.

The little book is clearly divided into four prophecies:

(1) Ezra 6:15. The history of the period is told in Ezra, Nehemiah, Haggai, Zechariah and the end of II Chronicles.

1. *On the first day of the sixth month,* 1. The people are reproached for building houses for themselves and neglecting the house of God; the current drought is blamed to the lack of God's blessing.

2. *On the twenty-first day of the seventh month,* 2:1-9. The people are discouraged as they compare the small beginnings with the glories of the former Temple; so Haggai encourages them and predicts a far more glorious future for the Temple.

3. *On the twenty-fourth day of the ninth month,* 2:10-19. The people are warned not to expect God's blessing to come too soon; the effects of their former sin and indifference had not been removed.

4. *Another prophecy on the same day, 2:20-23, in which a glorious future is envisioned for Zerubbabel, the representative of the royal line of David.*

XXIII.

THE BOOK OF ZECHARIAH

The meaning of the word Zechariah is "Whom Jehovah has remembered"; it was a very common name among the Jews. This Zechariah was the son of Berechiah, the son of Iddo (1:1). We are taken back to the grandfather because Iddo was one of the leading Levites who came back from the Exile with Zerubbabel and Joshua (Neh. 12:1, 4, 7); and it is quite probable that our Zechariah is to be identified with the priest Zechariah "of Iddo" of Neh. 12:16. Thus at the time of the return from exile in 538, the grandfather Iddo was one of the elderly leaders of the Levites, and Zechariah was one of the younger priests.

The first of the prophecies of Zechariah is dated "in the eighth month, in the second year of Darius." That is only two months later than the first of Haggai's prophecies. The last of the dated prophecies of Zechariah came on the fourth day of the ninth month of the fourth year of Darius (7:1). These definite dates cover the period of 520-518 B. C.

The first part of the book of Zechariah, chapters 1-8, came from the same period from which the book of Haggai came, beginning only two months later and going two years further. And the theme of the rebuilding of the Temple occupies the same prominent place here that it did in Haggai. It will not be necessary to review the historical background here because it was the same as that of Haggai. We remember that it took four and a half years for the rebuilding of the Temple after Haggai and Zechariah persuaded them to undertake it again; so all the dated prophecies of Zechariah come

within the first half of that period. After that time the work went along so well that no more prophetic encouragement was needed, it seems.

While the purpose and theme of Haggai and the first part of Zechariah were the same, the characteristics of their books are quite different. Zechariah is much fuller than Haggai. Zechariah is much more of a literary production, in contrast with the simplicity of Haggai. And, most strikingly, Zechariah is full of apocalyptic imagery. The prophet sees many visions and passes them on to his audience. The meaning of many of the visions is very clear to anyone who is familiar with the apocalyptic style; at times we are not able to reconstruct the context fully enough to allow us to be certain as to the exact meaning of the symbols that are used.

In the midst of uncertainty as to the interpretation of some portions of the book, the main teachings are clear. The people are encouraged to go on with the work of rebuilding the Temple of God. They are given glimpses of the glory that is still in store for the house of God and the people of God, some of them to be realized only in the fullness of the messianic age. And they are assured that all that hinders the coming of this age of glory will be removed, the hostility of the heathen nations and the sins of the chosen people. We recognize, of course, that much of this ideal is yet to be realized; it may still be used to encourage us to carry on that portion of God's work that is entrusted to us now.

As in other post-Exilic literature there is a great emphasis on the Temple and the ritual elements of religion. But the ethical and spiritual emphasis was by no means forgotten, as we can see clearly from such passages as 8:16-17.

The Second Part of Zechariah

When we come to chapter 9 we come to something that is quite different. No longer do we have dated prophecies that we can fit definitely into a certain historical situation; in 9:1 and 12:1 we have the rather general introduction, "The burden of the word of the Lord . . .," the same expression that we find in Malachi 1:1. The problem of the rebuilding of the Temple is not mentioned. We pass from prose to poetry as the predominant literary form. Many smaller matters of style are different from those found in the first part of the book. Certain allusions to nations and events are difficult to fit into the time of Zechariah as we know it.

Such facts as these are freely admitted by all students of Zechariah. In the explanation of these facts, however, there is still great diversity. It may be considered one of the most perplexing problems of Old Testament criticism.

Some believe that these later chapters were the work of Zechariah in his old age, long after the earlier part of the book. The Temple has already been rebuilt, and so that is no longer a problem. The difference of style is considered to be due to the change in age of the prophet and the change of subject. The reference to Greece, or Javan, in 9:13 is supposed to be satisfied by the rise of the Greek power as we see it at Marathon, Thermopylae and Salamis (490-480 B. C.). Other difficulties pointing to earlier or later dates are handled with more or less plausibility. The fact that these chapters circulate with the first part creates a presumption in favor of their authorship by Zechariah, but that presumption must not be pressed too far.

Some believe that these chapters, or parts of them, were written long before the time of Zechariah. It is argued that the mention of Hadrach, Damascus and

Hamath in 9:1-2 points to a time before the conquest of these countries by Tiglath-pileser. The mention of Egypt and Assyria together in 10:10-11 seems to point to a pre-Exilic time, as does the mention of Judah and Israel. Some think that the mention of teraphim and diviners suggests a pre-Exilic date likewise. Some think that "the mourning of Hadadrimmon in the valley of Megiddon" refers to the mourning for King Josiah in 608 B. C. Some see a certain similarity in style to the pre-Exilic prophets. No one of these matters can be considered at all final. Probably no scholar today would care to defend the view that all of the second part of the book came from pre-Exilic times; at most, some would believe that certain pre-Exilic prophecies were later included in a post-Exilic collection. It is not at all certain, however, that any portion of the book should be assigned to pre-Exilic times.

Others believe that these chapters should be placed long after the time of Zechariah. Some of the arguments for this later dating are based upon the supposed dependence of these chapters upon later books of the Old Testament and the similarity to the style and thoughts of later literature, even to those of First Maccabees. It must be admitted that these cannot be considered much more than suggestions and that we know all too little of the history and development of thought among the Jews at this period. Probably the most definite proof of a later date is found in 9:13, where the sons of Greece are pictured as the enemies of the Jews. Although Greece began to win victories over the Persians about 490 B. C., it was not until the battle of Issus in 333 B. C. that Alexander the Great overthrew the Persian empire and the Greeks actually became the real enemies of the Jews.

Some scholars take these chapters apart and try to assign various dates to various parts of them. It is an interesting field for technical study, but we cannot go into the various theories that have been propounded.

It must be freely admitted that all the theories that have yet been developed present their difficulties and that a certain solution of the problem is not yet possible. It seems certain that most of the second part of the book is to be placed many years after the first chapters; it is possible that they may have been produced by the aged prophet himself.

These later chapters of Zechariah give us a series of predictions concerning the future of Israel and her enemies. Many symbols are used, as in the earlier part of the book. The final triumph of the children of God over all their enemies and His is predicted.

AN OUTLINE OF THE CONTENTS OF THE BOOK

1. *The call to repentence,* 1:1-6.
2. *Visions of encouragement,* 1:7-6:15.
3. *The question of the fast days,* 7-8.
4. *Later apocalyptic predictions,* 9-14.

XXIV.

THE BOOK OF MALACHI

The word Malachi means "my messenger." We cannot be certain as to whether the word should be considered a proper name or not. In 3:1 it is customary to translate the word "my messenger" and make it refer to the forerunner of the Messiah. There are some who think that 1:1 was added to the prophecy later, and that "Malachi" was simply a general title that could be applied to any unknown prophet.[1] However, the analogy of other books of prophecy makes us think that Malachi was intended to be the actual name of the prophet. In either case we know nothing about the personality or history of the prophet other than what can be derived from inference from the little book itself.

We are not able to give an exact date for Malachi, although the general period is clear. Judah is under the rule of a governor (1:8). The Temple is built (1:10; 3:1, 10), and offerings are being made upon the altar. When we examine the sins against which Malachi inveighs, we find them the same as those that occupy a very prominent place in the works of Ezra and Nehemiah. Thus Malachi is to be placed later than the time of Haggai and Zechariah and probably shortly before the reforms of Ezra and Nehemiah; some time between 450 and 430 B. C. could not be far wrong. It is a possible theory that it may have been written during the absence of Nehemiah at Susa in 433-432 B. C.

The unity of the book of Malachi is generally conceded. The only debate is as to whether 1:1 was written by Malachi or was added as a title by some

(1) The Septuagint in 1:1 translates the word "messenger."

later hand, and that is not a matter of any real significance.

The Jews have rebuilt the Temple, but a period of moral and ceremonial decline has set in. The priests are presenting inferior offerings to God, a thing that even heathen religions would not dare to do. The people are not paying their tithes to the Lord and are thus robbing God. There is much indifference concerning all religious matters. The men are divorcing their Jewish wives who have borne them children, and are marrying foreign wives. Foreign customs and religions are contaminating the true way of life. It is not strange, then, that the Jews are not obtaining the blessing of Jehovah. When the people are willing to return to God He will gladly pour out His blessing upon them. Those who are true to God have their names written in His book and will obtain His blessing; but the wicked must receive the punishment that is their due. And with a little glimpse of the last days with Elijah as the forerunner, the little book comes to a close.

The style of Malachi is very forceful. He paints his pictures clearly and emphatically. His great use of dialogue is very effective.

Malachi emphasizes the importance of ritual, but he does not neglect the importance of morality and spirituality.

Malachi's reference to heathen religions in 1:11 is very striking: "For from the rising of the sun even unto the going down of the same my name shall be great among the Gentiles; and in every place incense shall be offered unto my name, and a pure offering: for my name shall be great among the heathen, saith the Lord of hosts." This is probably the finest anticipation of the universality of the true religion that can be found in the Old Testament.

We may suggest the following brief outline of the book:

1. *The sins of the Jewish priests and people,* 1-2.
2. *The punishments for sin and the blessings of righteousness,* 3-4.

XXV.

THE BOOK OF OBADIAH

The word Obadiah means "worshipper of Jehovah." It was a very common name among the Jews. We know nothing whatever about the life of this particular Obadiah. Josephus' identification of him with the governor under Ahab (I Kings 18:3-4) is impossible chronologically.

It is impossible to determine at all accurately the date of Obadiah. Two factors enter into consideration, and they seem to point in opposite directions.

There is a great similarity between this little book and the oracle against Edom in Jeremiah 49:7-22. From the form of the two prophecies, it seems highly probable that the one in Obadiah is earlier than the one in Jeremiah.

On the other hand the description of the part that the Edomites played in a great calamity that befell Judah seems to point to the time of the destruction of Jerusalem in 586 B. C. The calamity is looked upon as past, and the time is approaching when the Edomites are to be punished for the part they played in it. That would point to some time after the Return from Exile, probably not far from the time of Malachi, who himself has something to say about the Edomites.

How can these divergent views be reconciled?

Some argue for the priority of Obadiah to Jeremiah and assert that the calamity of verses 11-14 was not the destruction of Jerusalem in 586 but an invasion of Judah by the Philistines and Arabians as recorded in II Chronicles 21:16-17. This is a possible view, but it seems strange that a calamity which called forth such

a description as that in Obadiah should be described so briefly in Chronicles and not even mentioned in Kings.

Others argue for a post-Exilic date for Obadiah, about 450 B. C. They must deal with the similarity to Jeremiah 49 and offer some explanation of it. Some believe that both Jeremiah and Obadiah made use of an oracle against Edom that was produced by some unknown person, and that Obadiah, though much later than Jeremiah, stayed closer to the original form of it. Other scholars would date that particular part of Jeremiah later than the time of Obadiah and consider it an interpolation in the book of Jeremiah. Others would say that the book of Obadiah should be considered as a composite work, some of it coming from the time before Jeremiah and the rest of it after the Exile.

It is impossible to draw any certain conclusions as to the date and unity of the book from the meager data at hand. Probably the best view is to consider the book a unit and make it about contemporary with Malachi; we may then think that the similarity to Jeremiah 49 is due to both prophets using an earlier common source.

The theme of the little book, however, is very clear. Verse 1 says, "Thus saith the Lord God concerning Edom," and it is Edom that occupies the central place in the whole book. The Edomites had been enemies of the Jews for some time. Especially at the time of the great calamity that came to Judah did they side with the enemies and take their part in afflicting the Jews. Therefore the Lord God was going to send punishment upon the Edomites. Already the punishment was beginning, but more would yet come until they should be utterly destroyed. Then the little prophecy closes with a prediction of God's punishment upon all the enemies of His people and the coming of the kingdom of the Lord.

Thus this virtually unknown prophet at some unknown time emphasizes again his faith in his God to care for His own people and to send punishment upon His and their enemies — in this age and in eternity.

XXVI.

THE BOOK OF JOEL

The word Joel means "Jehovah is God"; it was a very common name among the Jews. Our Joel was the son of Pethuel; other than that we know nothing about him.

Joel did not date his prophecy by the reign of any king nor by any specific allusion to any historical situation that is known to us. The data from which any date can be deduced are very scanty, and it is impossible to reach any certain conclusion.

Some scholars feel that the best data is one approximately contemporaneous with Amos, thus making Joel one of the earliest of the prophets. In favor of this view are such factors as these. The place in the list of the minor prophets seems to indicate that the Jews considered it very early. The enemies of the Jews that are mentioned, the Edomites, the Phoenicians and the Philistines, fit the earlier period somewhat better than a post-Exilic time. The language of Joel is much like that of Amos; some scholars think that it is highly probable that Amos actually made use of the work of Joel.

On the other hand there are certain minor points that seem to favor a post-Exilic date. 3:2 speaks of the Jews as having been scattered among the nations; that probably pushes us into post-Exilic times, although it should be noted that the passage is a predictive one. In 3:6 the Jews have been sold to the Grecians as slaves; this is most easily accounted for after the Exile, though the earlier Phoenicians were great travelers and could have taken Jewish slaves to Greece in pre-Exilic times.

No mention is made of a king but only of priests and elders; that would fit post-Exilic times well, though such an argument from silence is far from conclusive. No mention is made of the Northern Kingdom, which suggests — but hardly proves — that the Northern Kingdom was no longer in existence. The emphasis upon the ritualistic side of religion fits in much better with the later rather than the earlier prophets. As the Temple and the wall of Jerusalem are in existence, if the book is post-Exilic it must be later than the time of Nehemiah.

The weight of evidence seems to favor slightly the later dating, about 400 B. C., though we should not exclude the possibility of the earlier dating, about 800 B. C.

The occasion of the writing of the book was a terrible plague of locusts and a devastating drought, a combination of calamities that was causing great suffering among the Jews. The prophet blames these misfortunes upon the sins of the people and their leaders, especially the sin of failing to give God the worship and service that were His due. The leaders were urged to call the people together for fasting and repentance, for prayer that God would send His blessing upon them again. Then the prophet pictures the blessings that God will send upon His people, and likewise the punishment that He will send upon His enemies. And in that the prophet passes easily from the immediate future to the last days, to the Day of the Lord, and gives us one of the most beautiful apocalyptic pictures that can be found in the Old Testament.

The description of the locusts in chapter 2 is more awful than that in chapter. 1. Some think that the author passes from a literal plague of locusts to an even greater calamity which is likened to it. Some think

that both chapters are to be taken symbolically. It is probably best to take both of them literally as applying to an actual plague of locusts.

We may suggest the following divisions in the book:

1. *The calamities and their cause; the call to repentance,* 1:1-2:27.
2. *The blessings of God and His punishments in the last days,* 2:28-3:21.

XXVII.

THE BOOK OF JONAH

The word Jonah means "dove." Jonah was the son of Amittai, as we learn from 1:1 and II Kings 14:25. Kings also says that he was from Gath-hepher (in Zebulun, north of Nazareth) and that he prophesied under Jeroboam II (about 787 to 746 B. C.). He was thus a prophet of the Northern Kingdom and was contemporaneous with Amos. The book of Kings does not mention the incidents recorded in the book of Jonah, and the book of Jonah gives no indication of a date, other than that it was before the fall of Nineveh in 612 B. C.

The book of Jonah is a story about Jonah; nowhere is it stated that Jonah was the author of the book, though there are some who think that he was. If he was the author, then the book must be dated at some time in the eighth century B. C.; if not, then a date later than that would be possible.

For a long time a debate has been raging as to whether the book of Jonah is simple history or not.

Those who believe in the impossibility of the miraculous find it impossible to believe in the truth of the story of the great fish. Some Conservatives attempt to give a natural explanation to all the events recorded: others consider the book a history of certain purely miraculous events. Other Conservatives still, while believing in the possibility of the miraculous, do not believe that the book of Jonah was meant to be treated as a historical document.

The city of Nineveh is spoken of in the past tense in 3:3, seemingly pointing to a date after its destruction in 612. Then in 3:6 we have the rather strange expres-

sion, "the king of Nineveh"; the king of Assyria or the actual name of the king would have been much more natural coming from one who lived in the eighth century. The conversion of a whole city is historically improbable, and we have no record of any such turning to God on the part of the Assyrians. There are certain Aramaisms and late expressions in the book that seem to point to a late date. Some scholars see evidence for a late date in the use of some of the later psalms by Jonah. No one of these points can be considered conclusive evidence, but taken together they do carry real weight.

There are some factors that should be considered on the other side of the picture.

The story is told in simple prose, except for the psalm in chapter 2. The book speaks of actual, well-known places — Joppa, Tarshish and Nineveh. Its hero is identified with a character mentioned in a historical book. In Matthew 12:39-41 and Luke 11:29-32 Jesus said: "As Jonah was . . . so shall the Son of man be . . ."; likewise: "The men of Nineveh shall rise in judgment and condemn you . . ."

We should recognize, however, that not one of these points is conclusive proof of the historical character of the book. It is not necessary that figurative language be thus labeled; Jesus Himself did not always say, "Wait a minute; I'm going to use a parable now." The use of names of actual places and characters is perfectly proper in parables or allegories or historical novels. Even the words of Jesus need not be taken as final proof that He thought the book of Jonah pure history; any one of us could make a reference to a play of Shakespeare, for example, and see a parallel between an event of pure fiction and a historical event. Jesus may have done something like that, though His words

suggest strongly that there was at least a historical background for the book.

While Radical scholars are practically forced to deny the historicity of the book of Jonah, Conservative scholars may well differ among themselves in regard to this matter. Some of them are convinced that the book is simple history; others are just as sure that it should be taken as a parable; others feel that the evidence makes it impossible for them to draw any certain conclusion.

It is to be regretted that the debate over the historicity of the book has usually obscured the great lesson of the book. And that lesson does not depend in the least upon any view of historicity. The parables of Jesus contain some of His most wonderful messages; we would not think of wasting time debating about whether the story of the Prodigal Son was history or parable. It is to be regretted also that a belief in the historicity of Jonah has been made by some a test for orthodoxy, when in reality it is a matter about which the most Conservative students have every right to refrain from dogmatism.

Even though the book should be treated as history, the various hints that have been mentioned above point to a rather late date for the composition of the book. And the central theme of the book seems to be directed at the narrowness that came to characterize later Judaism. Some think that it is a direct answer to the narrowness that followed the work of Ezra — a narrowness for which Ezra himself cannot be held solely to blame. Some time near 400 B. C. would be at least one very reasonable date for the composition of the book; if it be taken as history, it is still possible to think of Jonah himself as having been the author or that the book was produced shortly after his time.

In some ways the book of Jonah is one of the most remarkable books of the Old Testament. After the Return from the Exile particularly, the Jewish nation became more and more narrow and exclusive. They seemed to think that God was obligated to shower His blessings upon them alone. They seemed to forget that God had been blessing them in order to pass on His blessing to the other nations as well. We see that narrowness all too evident even in New Testament times, and even the Christians seemed reluctant to give it up. But some prophetic spirit of old had a far clearer idea of the love of God than that. He knew that the love of God was great enough to love even the inhabitants of that wicked, hated city, Nineveh. The attitude of Jonah was the typical attitude of the vast majority of the Jews, and God found it necessary to drive him to his duty; even to the last Jonah thought more of his own prestige and his own physical comfort than of the lives and souls of the great city.

On the other hand, the foreigners who appear in the story are painted in much more admirable colors. The seamen cry to their own gods and then acknowledge Jehovah as the true God. The inhabitants of Nineveh repent and pray for mercy when they are warned of their sins. No attempt is made, of course, to put heathen religions on a par with the worship of Jehovah; but the heathen nations are pictured as fertile fields for evangelization, and Jehovah, as a God who rules over and loves all nations. The book of Jonah has much in common with Jesus' parable of the Good Samaritan.

In a way we may say that the book of Jonah was a failure, because it did not succeed in breaking down the narrow, egotistical spirit of the Jews — and so was the parable of the Good Samaritan. But that wonderful little book and that parable are still holding aloft that

ideal and challenging us to believe in a God with a universal love and to give up all the narrowness of our little racial, national, social and economic groups. Jonah was one of the earliest foreign missionary books; it was the Old Testament counterpart of "God so loved the world . . ."

The outline of the book follows the chapter divisions:

1. *Jonah's disobedience and its results,* 1.
2. *Jonah's prayer from the belly of the fish, and his release,* 2.
3. *Jonah's preaching in Nineveh, and the repentance of the Ninevites,* 3.
4. *Jonah's narrowness and God's universal love,* 4.

Part Four
The Writings
(Minus Chronicles and Ezra-Nehemiah)

XXVIII.

THE BOOK OF PSALMS

The word "psalm" comes from a Greek word which means the music of a stringed instrument, or, more generally, a song. The title "Psalms" comes to us by way of the Septuagint. The Hebrews called the book "The Book of Praises." The Hebrew name emphasizes the contents of the book, while the Greek emphasizes the form.

The book of Psalms was the song book of the Temple and Synagogue of the ancient Jews, and it has provided songs for Jews and Christians alike down through the centuries until the present. But the book of Psalms was even more a devotional treasury for the individual; the average Christian makes more use of Psalms than of any other book of the Old Testament. The student should not lose sight of either of these two aspects.

The Titles of the Psalms

Many of the Psalms are preceded by titles. In the Hebrew Bible these titles are counted as verse 1, though in our English Bibles they are not; that makes a difference in verse numbering in many of the Psalms. These titles frequently give some indication as to the authorship of the Psalms, or contain a dedication, or give something of the historical background, or indicate the instruments that should accompany the Psalm, or give

the tune to which the Psalm should be sung, or indicate the kind of Psalm; a title may give any one or more of these things.

It is universally agreed that these titles were not parts of the original Psalms but were added later; they have not the slightest right to be considered a part of the inspired Bible. There are times when they give demonstrably false information. At times they seem to be reasonable guesses. Some of them may have come from trustworthy tradition.

We cannot tell just when the titles were added to the Psalms. Some think that they began to be used after the Exile when more emphasis was placed on ritualistic matters. They were definitely in existence by the time the Septuagint translation was made, though the fact that there are so many differences between the Greek and the Hebrew titles makes us feel that they had probably not been in use very long before that time.

Some have raised the question as to whether the titles made any attempt to indicate authorship. The Hebrew back of "A Pslam of David" really means "A Psalm to David." The same Hebrew preposition translated "to" is also used in the Psalm titles in dedications: "To the Chief Musician." It is probable that the preposition is normally used to imply authorship; at times the note about the historical occasion of the Psalm makes that clear. Assuming that that is the intent, the titles in the Hebrew text assign authors to the Psalms thus:

To David: 3-9; 11-32; 34-41; 51-65; 68-70; 86; 101; 103; 108-110; 122; 124; 131; 133; 138-145 — a total of 73 Psalms. (The Septuagint adds 15 more Psalms and omits 4.)

To Moses, 90.

To Solomon: 72; 127 (The Septuagint omits 127).

To the Sons of Korah: 42; 44-49; 84; 85; 87; 88.

To Asaph: 50; 73-83.

To Heman, with the Sons of Korah: 88.

To Ethan: 89.

To (or upon) Jedithun (alone or with others): 39; 62; 77.

The Septuagint (in all or some manuscripts) assigns still other authors as follows: the sons of Jonadab, 71; Zechariah, 138 and 139; Haggai and Zechariah, 146-148; and Jeremiah, 137.

The Psalms which had no indication of authorship in their titles were called by the Jews "orphan Psalms"; there were 34 of these in the Hebrew text.

Korah was probably a descendant of the man of that name who was swallowed up by the earth because of rebellion (Numbers 16:1); that would make him a descendant of Kohath, one of the three sons of Levi. Heman was one of the sons of Korah. Asaph was a descendant of Gershom, and Ethan of Merari. Thus all three of the sons of Levi had their part in the traditional production of the Psalms. I Chronicles tells us that Asaph, Heman and Ethan were appointed to sing and sound the symbols when David brought the ark to Zion (15:16-19), and later to be the leaders of the orchestra (16:5-7, 41-42; and 25:1-5). Some think that Jedithun was another name for Ethan; some think that it was a musical term; some think that he was another otherwise unknown psalmist.

A number of the titles purport to give the occasion on which David composed the Psalm in question. Usually it is easy to see the places alluded to in the books of Samuel. Some of these allusions are quite appropriate, though some are very farfetched. In no case can we consider this information anything more than ancient tradition, though in some cases it may be correct.

Some of the musical and liturgical instructions in the titles are intelligible to us today, though many of them are complete mysteries.[1] They are of no importance to the average student.

The literary types of the Psalms are often indicated in the titles. *Mizmor,* or psalm, occurs in the title of 57 of the Psalms. *Shir,* or song, occurs rather frequently, either alone or in combination with other titles. *Tehillah,* or praise, occurs in only one title, though its plural form is used for the title to the whole book in the Hebrew. *Tephillah,* or prayer, occurs in a few titles. The meaning of three such words is not known: *maskil, mikhtam* and *shiggayon;* these occur in several of the titles.

Authorship and Date

The unit for the consideration of authorship and date is, of course, the individual Psalm rather than the book as a whole. That being the case, it is easy to see that the available data for determining such matters are very meager.

One bit of information that must be considered is the title of the Psalm, when the Psalm has a title. But it must be recognized that these titles are not parts of the original Psalm but are only the product of a fairly ancient, though at times very untrustworthy, tradition. When the title contradicts the clear contents of the Psalm itself, we should have no hesitation in disregarding it; for example, those Psalms ascribed to David that speak of the Temple as in existence could not have been composed until the time of Solomon or later.

It is clearly impossible to believe that David composed *all* the Psalms accredited to him in the titles. Nor is there any information available that would make it possible to be absolutely certain that David was the

(1) As is also the meaning of the word Selah, which is not, of course, a glorified Amen, as very many seem to think.

author of any particular Psalm except Psalm 110, which was definitely assigned by Jesus to David in Mark 12:35 and parallels. But there seems to be conclusive evidence of the musical and poetic ability of David. The books of Samuel say that he was a skillful harpist, that he composed elegies on Saul and Jonathan and Abner, that he danced and leaped before the ark and that he composed two sacred poems in II Samuel 22 and 23. The later books of Chronicles fill in the picture of the musical and poetic activity of David with other details and make him the founder of the Temple psalmody. It is quite reasonable to believe that David may well have composed some of the Psalms in our Psalter.

There is no a priori reason why Moses may not have been the author of the Psalm assigned to him. The fact that more Psalms were not accredited to such early notables makes us feel that the titles did not come from pure guesses or wishful thinking.

We know entirely too little about the other authors mentioned in the Hebrew titles to be able to test their reputed authorship, except, of course, when there is a manifest anachronism in history or literary style.

Other than the titles and Jesus' reference to Ps. 110, we have no real information as to the name of a single author of any of the Psalms. Some students have attempted to make a case for individual authorship because of a supposed similarity between a certain Psalm and the writings of a certain prophet, but all such attempts are at best only guesses.

It is possible, however, at times to be rather certain that a particular Psalm was composed at a particular time, though it is impossible to assign an author's name to it. Often the unknown psalmist will give a clear reflection of the circumstances under which he was living, and thus it will be possible for us to date such a

Psalm accurately. There are times when a Psalm can be made to fit equally well two or more different historical situations; so we cannot tell which was the real background. We must remember, also, that our knowledge of Jewish history is by no means perfect; a certain Psalm may seem to fit rather well into a situation with which we are familiar, but it may fit exactly into another occasion of which we know nothing now.

At times it is possible to get some help in dating a Psalm from the language and style of the Psalm. Aramaisms, for example, are indications of a post-Exilic date. The more highly developed Psalms from the standpoint of mechanical construction are more likely to be late than the more simple ones. Writings of the prophets and other writings that can be dated serve as a standard of comparison for the undated Psalms. At times this criterion gives us real help; at times, none at all. Its use may be very subjective.

Thus the decision in matters of date and authorship depends upon a balancing of the evidence from the foregoing factors for each of the one hundred and fifty Psalms. The student must look to the critical commentaries for a fuller treatment. In general, we may present certain probable conclusions.

Many of the Psalms may have been composed by the authors mentioned in the titles, though no scholar would dare to defend the infallibility of the titles. It is probable that David composed many of the Psalms assigned to him. Many of the Psalms reflect clearly post-Exilic times. It is possible that some of the Psalms may have been composed as late as Maccabean times. More Radical scholars tend to date many of the Psalms in such late times; a Conservative scholar of long ago, John Calvin, admitted at least three Maccabean Psalms (44, 74 and 79). Fortunately, the spiritual value and inspira-

tion of a Psalm do not depend upon our being able to point out a definite date or author.

An Outline of the Book

The book of Psalms is divided into five books, following probably the fivefold division of the Pentateuch. Each of the books closes with a doxology; the doxology of the fifth book is the whole 150th Psalm, while that of the other books is the last verse of the last Psalm in the book. Thus the book is divided as follows:

Book I, Psalms 1-41.
Book II, Psalms 42-72.
Book III, Psalms 73-89.
Book IV, Psalms 90-106.
Book V, Psalms 107-150.

It is not known whether these five books ever circulated independently of the whole book or not. The fivefold division may have been made by the final editor purely in imitation of the Pentateuch. It is a fact that in books I and III the divine name *Elohim*, or God, occurs about four times as commonly as the name Jehovah, whereas in the other books Jehovah occurs about twenty times as frequently as *Elohim*. How much significance should be attached to that fact, if any, is still debatable. The modern student finds little or no value in the ancient fivefold division of the Psalms.

Types of Psalms

Psalms may be classified either by their form or by their subject matter.

It would not be useful here to go into any detailed classification of the forms of the Psalms. Most of these can be recognized only in the Hebrew text. Several of the Psalms seem to make use of acrostics. Several of them are clearly alphabetic Psalms, the most famous being the long 119th Psalm.

A wide range of subjects was covered in the Psalms. No division of subject matter can be considered completely satisfactory, but the following is suggested:

1. *Adoration of God;* Psalms of pure worship. There are many of these, such as 8, 19, 29, 33, 103, 113, 145, 146 and 148.

2. *Meditation;* the mind reflects upon some of the great truths of God's providence and God's Word. See, for example, 9-11, 16, 23, 24, 91 and 119.

3. *Thanksgiving.* These are usually composed to celebrate some national deliverance. Some of these are: 30, 40, 65, 76, 116, 129 and 149.

4. *Liturgical;* Psalms for use in connection with festivals and the Temple worship. Some of these are: 5, 26, 113-118 (the famous Hallel), 122 and 134.

5. *Historical Psalms,* rehearsing incidents from the nation's history, such as 78, 81, 105, 106, 114, 135 and 136.

6. *Penitential Psalms,* such as 6, 32, 38, 51 and 130.

7. *Psalms of petitions for various blessings;* e.g., 3, 4, 7, 12, 25, 31, 41, 60, 77, 120, 140 and 142.

8. *Royal and messianic Psalms,* such as 2, 18, 20, 21, 45, 72, 89, 110 and 132. At times a Psalm relating to one of the natural kings shades into a description of the King of kings; at times a description of contemporary blessedness leads to a description of the greater bliss of the times of the Messiah.

9. *Imprecatory Psalms,* such as 35, 58, 69, 83, 109 and 137. The Psalmist invokes a curse upon the enemies of his nation and his God. These Psalms come from an early time and give us a picture of undeveloped nature. Since then Christ has set a higher standard — "Love your enemies" — an ideal that we are still far from attaining.

XXIX.

THE BOOK OF PROVERBS

The book is called by the Jews "The Proverbs of Solomon," from the first two words of the Hebrew text, or, more briefly, "The Proverbs." In the Septuagint the title is "Proverbs of Solomon," while in the Vulgate it is "The Book of Proverbs." All of those titles are used in English, though that found in the Vulgate is probably the most common.

The Hebrew word translated "proverb" comes from a root that suggests a comparison. The word is used in a wider sense than the English word proverb, which is limited to a brief maxim or adage. The book of Proverbs contains much material that could not be placed in the English category of proverbs.

The book of Proverbs is an example of ancient Wisdom Literature, a type that is found in widely scattered areas in antiquity. Job and Ecclesiastes are other examples of it found in the Old Testament. Other examples of it in Jewish literature are Ecclesiasticus and the so-called Wisdom of Solomon. Egypt has produced much of such literature; "The Teaching of Amenophis," about 600 B. C., contains much material that is strikingly like parts of our Proverbs.

This book is a storehouse of simple, practical, ethical advice. Its outlook is ethical rather than theological. We should not neglect, however, the fact that a firm faith in God underlies the thinking of the book and at times is openly expressed. We see the ancient Jew as he faced all the details of his everyday life — and it is surprising how similar his problems were to those that we face today. The wise man passes on his wis-

dom for the benefit of one who is not so wise; the father gives his son the benefit of his greater experience; one generation urges a following one to learn the lessons of history and profit by them.

The one who followed the instructions of the wise could expect to live a happy, prosperous life. At times a religious motive is used, though often the appeal is simply a utilitarian one. We today would prefer to make much more of the motive of the life after death, but let us remember that we have a fuller revelation than was available in those early times.

It should be noted that Proverbs deals with the individual rather than with the nation. Many of the books of the Old Testament deal with the nation as their unit, but Proverbs places the emphasis on the individual that makes the book very practical for us today.

Authorship and Date

The book makes no claim to have been written by one author. 1:1 says, "The proverbs of Solomon the son of David, king of Israel." Many have applied that to the book *as a whole,* but that is clearly not the intent of other portions of the book even if it should be considered the intent of this verse. 10:1 starts: "The proverbs of Solomon." 22:17 says, "Bow down thine ear, and hear the words of the wise." 24:23 says: "These things also belong to the wise." 25:1 says: ""These are also proverbs of Solomon, which the men of Hezekiah king of Judah copied out." 30:1 starts: "The words of Agur the son of Jakeh." 31:1 says, ""The words of king Lemuel, the prophecy that his mother taught him."

Thus the book mentions Solomon, Agur, Lemuel and "the wise." It is quite clear that the book of Proverbs is a collection of collections of proverbs, just as Psalms was a collection of collections of individual Psalms.

It is probable that the indications of authorship that we have noted were placed there by the collector of each section or by the final editor who brought the sections together.[1] It is quite possible that they should be treated in the same way that we treat the titles of the various Psalms, as old but not necessarily infallible tradition.

Is it possible to believe that Solomon was the author of all the proverbs seemingly attributed to him by the three titles that mention his name? There are some difficulties that must be faced.

There are differences of style that seem to point to different authors instead of one for these sections. Some of the ideas expressed seem rather clearly to reflect a theological development much later than the time of Solomon. Some of the linguistic phenomena point to a much later time than that of Solomon. The author speaks about the king at times in a way that would hardly be appropriate for a king to have spoken about himself. The individualistic emphasis is somewhat strange in Solomon's time, and so on.

Not one of these matters can be considered a definite proof, though taken together they do have considerable weight. Many Conservatives would prefer to refrain from dogmatism about Solomon's authorship of *all* the parts seemingly accredited to him; no one, of course, should try to argue that Solomon was the author of the whole book.

There is definite evidence, however, as to the wisdom of Solomon and to the fact that he is reputed to have been the author of certain proverbs. I Kings 4:32 says that Solomon "spake three thousand proverbs: and his songs were a thousand and five." Clearly most of these

(1) In the Septuagint there is some difference in the order of the various sections, and the heading of 10:1 is omitted. The Septuagint omits some parts of the Hebrew text entirely and adds some proverbs not found in the Hebrew.

proverbs and songs were not preserved, though it is possible that some of them were. These Solomonic proverbs were preserved in our book of Proverbs, though the exact extent of them is impossible to determine. We cannot tell whether 1:1 is meant to be a note of authorship for the whole book (in which case it would be manifestly wrong) or for the first nine chapters (in which case, why should 10:1 repeat the name of Solomon?) or whether it is simply the first part of an incomplete sentence praising the wisdom of Solomon.

More conservative critics believe that rather large portions of Proverbs come from Solomon, while the tendency of the more radical criticism is to deny his authorship for most of the book if not the whole of it.

Nothing whatever is known about the other two named authors, Agur and Lemuel.

The wise men constituted a rather distinct class, along with the priests and the prophets, as early even as the time of Jeremiah.[1] Later they seem to have become even more prominent, producing a considerable body of literature in Jewish circles. Men of this class are probably to be given credit for most of Proverbs that is not to be ascribed to Solomon, Agur and Lemuel.

The dating of the various parts of Proverbs is exceedingly difficult. Those parts that are considered to have come from Solomon should be dated in his lifetime, of course. The other parts must be dated from the few hints that can be discovered from linguistic, historical and theological grounds. From the nature of the case, anything approaching certainty is impossible. The completed book was in its present form before about 200 B. C., because it is definitely described in Ecclesiasticus at that time. Much of the material in Proverbs

(1) Cf. Jeremiah 18:18.

may have come from pre-Exilic times, though some of it seems rather clearly post-Exilic. Similarities with Ecclesiasticus and with certain Greek literature in places make many scholars believe that some parts of Proverbs are not much older than Ecclesiasticus.

An Outline of the Book

No outline can give any adequate presentation of the subject matter of the book. For the most part the unit of thought is simply one verse.

We shall present simply the outline suggested by the indications of authorship. It is possible to notice certain characteristics of the various sections.

1. *The proverbs of Solomon,* 1-9. This is made up of longer, consecutive discourses, largely in praise of wisdom.

2. *The proverbs of Solomon,* 10:1-22:16. This is a series of loosely connected couplets.

3. *The words of the wise,* 22:17-24:34. This section resumes the continuous style of section 1.

4. *The proverbs of Solomon which the men of Hezekiah copied out,* 25-29. Mainly short, disconnected proverbs.

5. *The words of Agur,* 30.

6. *The words of Lemuel,* 31:1-9.

7. *An alphabetic poem in praise of the good wife,* 31:10-31.

XXX.

THE BOOK OF JOB

The book of Job receives its name from its principal character, Job. The meaning of the word Job is unknown.

The book of Job is one of the literary masterpieces of the world. Tennyson called it "the greatest poem of ancient or modern times"; Carlyle said that it was "one of the grandest things ever written with the pen."

The book opens with a prose prologue and closes with a prose epilogue, but the main body of the book is the very finest of Hebrew poetry. It is the closest thing in Hebrew literature to a true epic poem. It may be considered a great drama, though the movement of the drama is one of thought rather than of action. It is also a didactic poem.

The book deals with the universal problem of human sufferings. It seeks specifically to deal with the question "How can a just God allow the righteous to suffer?" The author does not pretend to give a complete answer to that question. In a way, the result of the book is more negative than positive; it condemns the easy solution to the problem of suffering that was so often given in that age — and is still given in ours. Job was a great sufferer; that proved according to the reasoning of his friends that he was a great sinner, suffering for the sins he himself had committed. It is true, of course, that some suffering is the direct result of sin on the part of the sufferer, but the book of Job flatly denies that that is the whole solution of the problem. Read Luke 13:1-4, and see that Jesus was trying to teach this very same lesson to His disciples.

While the main result of the book is negative, it does teach some other things about this most perplexing problem. We should recognize that there is more involved in suffering than the human sufferer can know; some of it may be only in the understanding of God and may deal with factors known only to the hosts of heaven; Job knew nothing of the background given to the reader in the prologue.

Some suffering is for the purpose of showing disbelievers that there is such a thing as pure religion. Satan and his followers maintained that Job was religious simply because he found that religion was a paying proposition. The extreme sufferings of Job gave the lie to that. The lives of patient, trusting servants of God are still telling the same story.

Some suffering is also for the purpose of instructing and developing the sufferer. Many a person has had his character really made by his suffering.

Then human beings should realize that they have no right to demand that God must explain all His doings to them. There are many things in life that we can never hope to understand, and it is not strange that this deep problem of suffering should be one of them. Frequently we must simply fall back on our faith in an all-wise and an all-loving God, believing, as Paul said, that He is making all things work together for good to those who love Him.

An Outline of the Contents

1. *Prologue*, 1-2. Prose. The scenes in heaven. The calamities that befell Job.
2. *The discourses of Job and his three friends: Eliphaz, Bildad and Zophar*, 3-31. Poetry.
   a. Job's cry of misery, 3.

b. First cycle of speeches, 4-14. Eliphaz, Job; Bildad, Job; Zophar, Job.
c. Second cycle of speeches, 15-21. The same speakers in the same order.
d. Third cycle of speeches, 22-28. Eliphaz, Job; Bildad, Job. This section closes with a remarkable poem in praise of wisdom, chapter 28.
e. Job's final survey of his case, 29-31.

3. *The speeches of Elihu*, 32-37. Poetry after a prose introduction, 32:1-6.
4. *God's answer to Job*, 38-41. Poetry.
5. *Job's answer to God*, 42:1-6. Poetry.
6. *Epilogue*, 42:7-17. Prose. The blessedness of Job restored.

The Historicity of the Book

No one should believe that the book contains a stenographic report of every word spoken by Job, his friends and God. The book is manifestly poetry; it is artificial, like an opera or a play of Shakespeare.

It is quite probable, however, that Job himself was a historical character, that his righteousness, his great sufferings and his final restoration were historical facts. The reference to him in Ezekiel 14:14 seems to show that he was an actual person. The reference in James 5:11 may simply be to the poetical book without any attempt to pass on the historical character of the book.

Using a historical person as his hero, the author built up his great poem from the depths of his own inspired imagination. He did not deny any known facts, but he felt entirely free to fill in the gap; Shakespeare's historical dramas or any historical fiction would be parallel cases of a perfectly legitimate and common procedure.

It is impossible, of course, to draw the line between pure fact and the author's inspired imagination. In fact, if it could be shown that Job never lived at all it would not detract one iota from the value and inspiration of this remarkable poem.

Date and Authorship

Nothing whatever is known of the name of the author. The talmudic tradition that Moses wrote it has nothing in its favor. Nothing in the book would give the slightest hint that Job himself was the author.

There are really two problems of date. The first is the date when the events recorded in the book took place; the second, when the book itself was written.

There is virtually nothing that gives any hints even to help solve these two problems.

The primitive life pictured and the great age of Job make us feel that Job lived in primitive, patriarchal times. He may have been a contemporary of Abraham or of Moses, though it is possible that he lived in somewhat later times. The fact that Job lived in Uz, east of Palestine itself, makes it impossible to be too certain of the age in which he lived.

The book itself seems clearly to have been composed much later than those primitive times. The mechanical excellence of the poetry, the depth with which theological problems are discussed, the presence of Aramaic influences — all seem to point to a time much later than that of the patriarchs. Beyond that, however, certainty is impossible. Different scholars have picked out tiny hints to justify datings between 1000 and 200 B. C. — matters of style, relationship to other Old Testament and apocryphal literature, persecution background, and so on. As good a guess as any would probably be during the later years of the Exile, giving it

the background of the same problem faced by Isaiah 40-66, a time when the problem of the suffering of the righteous was certainly prominent.

The Integrity of the Book

That much the greater part of the book was the work of the original author is freely admitted by the most radical critics. Some scholars, however, have felt that certain parts were later additions.

The prologue and the epilogue are in prose. Some scholars think that they were the primitive parts into which the poetry was introduced. Others think of one or both of them as being later additions. The prologue is almost absolutely necessary to any understanding of the book; so there is virtually no doubt as to its being original. Some say that the restoration of the material prosperity of Job is a religious anticlimax and is unworthy of the author of the book; so they say it was added later to bring about the desired happy ending. Such reasoning is far from convincing. Surely there is nothing wrong about God's blessing such a man. As Job made little, if any, use of the idea of a life after death, God's justice was best made clear in terms of this life.

Many believe that the speeches of Elihu (chapters 32-37) are a later interpolation. Elihu is not mentioned in the prologue. When Elihu has finished, Jehovah speaks to Job, not to Elihu. The introduction of this section is somewhat artificial, and some feel that the style of it is somewhat below the style of the book as a whole. Some say that the speeches of Elihu add nothing to those of the other three friends. These arguments have some weight, but they are far from making a certain case.

Some feel that the poem in praise of wisdom (chapter 28) was inserted later, though many of those who think it late consider it some of the finest poetry in the whole book.

Some think that the descriptions of Behemoth and Leviathan (40:15-41:34) are later insertions in the speech of Jehovah. It is true that these descriptions go into much greater detail than any of the others, but the case against them cannot be made very positive.

Some scholars feel that the text can be improved by making certain changes in the order of the speeches, but all of their suggestions are very subjective and far from convincing.

The fact that the Septuagint presents a text somewhat different from the Hebrew text should make us hesitate to affirm dogmatically that our Hebrew text is exactly the original form; yet the present Hebrew form is probably the best approximation to the original that is available to us. The more or less subjective efforts made to improve upon the text by omitting parts of it or by changing the order of parts of it do probably more harm than good and smack too much of attempting to judge an ancient work of genius by modern standards.

XXXI.

THE SONG OF SOLOMON

The Hebrew title of the book is "The Song of Songs," taken from the first two words. The using of the same word twice is a very common Hebrew way of showing emphasis. Thus the title means, "*The* Song," or "The Most Beautiful of Songs." The Septuagint, the Vulgate and the English Revised Version follow the Hebrew title. The King James and the American Revised Version use the title "The Song of Solomon."

The Interpretation of the Book

This book has received probably more different interpretations than any other book of Scripture. We shall review briefly some of the more important methods that have been used.

From very early times there have been those who considered the book an allegory. For Jewish interpreters it was considered an allegory of the love of Jehovah for Israel. For the Christians it was the love of Christ for His Church. Some of the interpreters went so far as to read various spiritual meanings into all the details of the book, while others did not go far beyond the identifications of the hero and heroine as Jehovah or Christ and Israel or the Church. It is certainly true that Scripture elsewhere frequently uses the love of a husband for his wife as a figure of the love of Jehovah for Israel and of Christ for His Church, but that is something quite different from the allegorical interpretation of this whole book.

There are those who take a typical interpretation of the book, a view closely allied with the allegorical in

its milder forms. They believe that the primary reference is to Solomon and the Shulamite, but that Solomon is a type of Christ and the Shulamite a type of the Church.

Others think that the book was a collection of wedding songs to be sung at the wedding of Solomon and the Shulamite, songs relating primarily to experiences in their own courtship.

Others consider the book an ancient drama. Some adherents of this view think that there are just two characters, Solomon and the Shulamite; others add a third character, a shepherd, and see the Shulamite torn between the love for her simple shepherd lover and the wealthy, powerful Solomon. The scholars who hold this view differ widely among themselves also in assigning the lines to their various characters, as the stage directions of the book are very few — if there are really any at all. Making Solomon the villain of the piece is definitely against the view that has three characters. The book is also very short to be a real drama.

One of the most popular methods of interpretation at present is to consider the book of a collection of wedding songs. There is real evidence that Syrians even until modern times considered a newly married couple a king and a queen during the week of the wedding festival; a simple throne is erected upon the threshing floor, and the guests at the feast act as members of their court. Thus in this poem the marriage is not between the literal Solomon and the Shulamite but between two Jewish young people who for the week are given the name of Israel's most glorious king and his bride. Some of the songs would be sung by the bride; some by the groom; some by the guests.

Others would consider the book a more general collection of love songs — songs not necessarily to be sung at the wedding.

While it would be wise to refrain from dogmatism, a true grammatico-historical interpretation of the book certainly seems to favor one of the latter views. The beauties of nature and the exquisite joys of true love between a man and a maid are painted in chaste but very plain language — language that must be toned down somewhat in the translations to keep from offending our modern taste. Should it be considered strange that Scripture has a place for songs of pure love between a man and a woman? Scripture recognizes this intimate relationship as pure and holy and frequently uses it as a figure of the love between God and His people. We are probably still closer to the Victorian rather than the Scriptural approach to these matters. The Song of Solomon did not have the various restrictions that we have but could deal in all beautiful frankness with even some of the intimacies of married love.

Authorship and Date

The first verse says: "The song of songs, which is Solomon's." The words translated "which is Solomon's" mean literally "which is to Solomon." The same preposition is used here that is used in the title of the Psalms. It is probable that that verse seeks to say that Solomon was the author, though that is not the only possible interpretation. Possibly the sense of "about" was meant; possibly the book was dedicated to Solomon. On the other hand, it is possible that this title was not a part of the original book any more than the titles of the Psalms; it may reflect only an ancient tradition taken from the mention of Solomon in the text.

There are those who feel that the hints of wealth and travel and wide knowledge of nature fit in well with

the theory of Solomonic authorship. Believing that the first verse is an integral part of the book and that it means that Solomon was the author, they believe that it is necessary to believe that he wrote it. It would be a bit strange for Solomon to have composed the songs for his own wedding, but it is not impossible.

Others would say that it was written in Solomon's day for his wedding but by someone else, taking the preposition in the sense of "dedicated to."

But those who think that the book was a drama about Solomon or that Solomon was simply a name for the young groom or lover are inclined to reject the Solomonic authorship. There are many Aramaic influences to be seen in the language, and even some Persian and Greek words seem to be used. It is barely possible to explain such things in the time of Solomon if a person takes a line of interpretation that makes the book apply to the historic person of Solomon. But otherwise it is probably best to follow the hints of linguistic style and place the date around 300 or 400 B. C.

The Unity of the Book

Those who believe that Solomon composed the book find no reason to doubt that he composed it all.

Those who place the book later vary somewhat in their views of the unity and integrity of the book. There is a manifest unity in general style and subject matter. Some scholars who believe in the drama theory find it necessary to rearrange some of the parts and consider certain parts later interpolations. Some of those who consider the book a collection of wedding or love songs consider it the work of one great unknown poet; others think that some unknown editor collected some current love songs and secured the unity of style by his editorial work on them. Dogmatism is hardly appropriate in such an indefinite matter.

The Contents of the Book

The style of the book is that of beautiful Hebrew poetry. There is the characteristic parallelism and a very full and effective use of figurative language.

It would be unprofitable to attempt an outline of the contents. At times it is impossible to know who is speaking, no matter which method of interpretation is used.

XXXII.

THE BOOK OF RUTH

This little book is one of the most beautiful short stories ever written. The plot is simple but is handled in a very effective way. The style is that of a prose poem. We are given a very attractive picture of the ancient times of the judges and of a group of characters who were chosen to play their part in the ancestry of the great King David.

The events recorded in Ruth took place in the later years of the period of the Judges; the son of Boaz and Ruth was the grandfather of David. The twelfth century B. C. would be the approximate time.

The book is named from its principal character rather than from its author. There is an old Jewish tradition that Samuel was the author, but there is nothing in the book itself that would point in that direction. Nothing can be known about the name of the author.

Likewise, nothing of a definite nature can be said as to the date of the composition of the book. As the genealogy in the book includes David, it could not have been written before the time that David had become a famous king, or at least before Samuel anointed him to be king. How much later than that time it was actually written it is impossible to tell. The fact that the Jewish canon included it in the Writings rather than in the Law or Prophets seems to indicate that it was written later than Judges, Samuel and Kings. Certain scholars seek to establish literary connections between Ruth and certain of the documents of the Pentateuch, even their late document P, and thus say that Ruth must be later than that time; their arguments are

suggestive but lack much of being positive proof. Certain Aramaic influences and seemingly late Hebrew constructions seem to point to a time not far from the Exile, though there are characteristics of style that are much like some of the best of the earlier literature; probably the best explanation of these seemingly contradictory notes is the theory that the author was consciously imitating the earlier literature to give his ancient story its proper literary setting. Another hint of a rather late date is the necessity of explaining the ancient custom of removing the shoe. Some scholars believe that at least one purpose of the book was to combat the narrow nationalism of the Ezra-Nehemiah legislation, and so they date the book at that period. We cannot place the book too late; its style is not sufficiently Aramaic and its attitude toward foreigners is too friendly to have come from Maccabean times. Probably some time not far from the Exile would best account for the factors involved.

Some scholars deny the historicity of the events recorded, though there is no real basis for doing so. The friendly attitude of David toward the king of Moab recorded in I Samuel 22:3-4 is an incidental confirmation of the truth of the story of Ruth that David's great-grandmother was a Moabitess. The general presentation of the customs and actions harmonizes with what little we know about that period of Jewish history. There is no way, of course, of telling how many of the details of the story depend upon a true tradition of historic fact and how many upon the literary imagination of the author.

It is hard to determine the purpose of the author in writing the book. Some feel that it was simply for the purpose of recording the history of those ancestors of David. Some feel that it was for the purpose of com-

bating the Ezra-Nehemiah strictness in regard to marriages with foreign women. Some feel that it was for the purpose of creating a more friendly attitude toward foreign nations in general. Some feel that the purpose was simply a literary one, to write a beautiful, interesting, effective short story. It is not impossible to believe that the author had several of these purposes in mind.

The chapter divisions serve as a good outline of the story:

1. *The story of Ruth and Naomi in Moab,* 1.
2. *Ruth gleans in the fields of Boaz,* 2.
3. *Ruth claims the right of the protection of her kinsman,* 3.
4. *The marriage of Ruth and Boaz,* 4.

XXXIII.

THE BOOK OF LAMENTATIONS

The title of this book in the Hebrew is the first word of the book (also the first word of chapters 2 and 4), "Ah, how." In rabbinic literature, in the Septuagint and in the Vulgate the book is called, because of its contents, "Lamentations," or, using the traditional authorship, "Lamentations of Jeremiah."

The book is composed of five dirges, one in each chapter of the book. They all show the background of the siege and destruction of Jerusalem in 586 B. C. The first four are pure dirges, while the fifth has more the nature of a prayer.

The first four dirges are alphabetic poems, each having twenty-two verses, each verse beginning with a letter of the Hebrew alphabet. The fifth chapter likewise has twenty-two verses, but there is no alphabetic arrangement. In chapter 1 the verses follow the order of the Hebrew alphabet with which we are familiar, while in chapters 2-4 the positions of *ayin* and *pe* are transposed; no satisfactory explanation has been given for this transposition. In chapters 1 and 2 each verse has three members, but only the first begins with the appropriate letter of the alphabet. In chapter 3 each verse has three members also, but each member begins with the same letter of the alphabet. Chapter 4 has verses of two members, with only the first member starting with the appropriate letter. In the first four chapters the elegiac meter is used, in which the second half of the verse is one beat shorter than the first half, usually four beats and three beats. In chapter 5 the normal

Hebrew meter predominates, with four beats in each half of the verse.

Authorship and Date

The book itself does not name its author. From ancient times, however, there has been a tradition that Jeremiah composed these dirges.

The Septuagint even has these words at the beginning of the book: "And it came to pass, after Israel was led into captivity and Jerusalem laid waste, that Jeremiah sat weeping and lamented with this lamentation over Jerusalem, and said . . . " The Hebraic character of this Greek makes it possible to believe that these words came from some Hebrew original, though we have no Hebrew manuscript of Lamentations which includes them.

II Chronicles 35:25 says: "And Jeremiah lamented for Josiah: and all the singing men and the singing women spake of Josiah in their lamentations to this day, and made them an ordinance in Israel: and, behold, they are written in the lamentations." There are some who interpret this to mean that the Chronicler attributed our book of Lamentations to Jeremiah, but that is far from certain. Our book is definitely connected with the fall of Jerusalem; only a part of it, possibly parts of chapter 4, can by any fair interpretation be considered a dirge appropriate to the death of Josiah. The statement does connect Jeremiah with the lamentation type of literature and says that certain of his lamentations were still known in the time of the Chronicler. It is possible that a superficial interpretation of this verse gave rise to the tradition that Jeremiah composed our book.

A careful comparison of the style of Lamentations and Jeremiah shows that there are some significant points of similarity, but also certain differences. The

similarities are not definite enough to constitute positive proof, though they are suggestive. The fewer differences may be due to the fact that Lamentations is written in poetry, while Jeremiah is written in prose.

The fact that the Hebrew Bible places Lamentations in the Writings rather than in the Prophets militates somewhat against the authorship by Jeremiah. Some, however, feel that Lamentations was separated from Jeremiah when the Rolls were put together for liturgical use.

Some critics believe that certain of the statements of Lamentations could hardly have been made by Jeremiah. In 2:9 he condemns the prophets, although he was a prophet himself; possibly he was condemning only the false prophets. In 4:20 he speaks of Zedekiah much more favorably than he did in Jeremiah 24:8-10; but Zedekiah was of the royal line and could be considered the Lord's anointed, and Jeremiah may have had high hopes of him in the earlier years of his reign. Some feel that in 4:17 the author puts himself in the class of those who had been looking to Egypt for help, while Jeremiah always opposed such an attitude; he may have been speaking of the attitude of his nation, though he himself may have opposed that attitude.

Some scholars believe that all five elegies were not written by the same person. We have noted already the different features of the poems. Chapters 2 and 4 have such vivid details of the siege that they are usually considered the most primitive by those who make any separation. Chapter 3 has the most highly artificial arrangement; so that is usually considered the latest. If the book is apportioned out to different authors, then Jeremiah could not have composed it all, if he composed any of it. However, the unity of background and subject matter and general poetic arrangement is

probably to be considered more weighty than the smaller differences.

The book is to be dated very shortly after the destruction of Jerusalem in 586 B. C., probably as a whole, certainly large parts of it. Only Jeremiah and Ezekiel are known to us as literary men of that period. The early traditional ascription to Jeremiah certainly fits the requirements; yet it is possible to think that the fact that he did fit, gave rise to the tradition that he actually wrote the book.

Certainty as to the authorship is unwarranted. Jeremiah may well have been the author; if he did not actually write the book, some one or more of his contemporaries must have done it.

The Contents of the Book

The book gives a graphic, contemporary picture of the despair that followed that great catastrophe in the life of the Jewish nation. Yet in that darkest of hours we see faint rays of hope and a real trust in Jehovah.

Each chapter is a separate poem, though the contents of them all are much alike. We suggest only a simple, twofold division:

1. *Poems describing the desolations of Jerusalem,* 1-4.

2. *A poetical prayer for deliverance and restoration.* 5.

XXXIV.

THE BOOK OF ECCLESIASTES

The Hebrew name of the book was derived from the title of the speaker, *Koheleth.* The exact form and meaning of the word are a bit uncertain, though "The Preacher" is probably very close to a true translation of it. Our "Ecclesiastes" comes from the Greek word used to translate *Koheleth.*

Authorship and Date

1:1 says: "The words of the Preacher, the son of David, king in Jerusalem." 1:12 says: "I the Preacher was king over Israel in Jerusalem." Solomon is not mentioned by name in the book, but these two verses definitely point to him. 1:16 speaks of his great wisdom, and 2:4-11 mentions his great works.

Following these verses, there was a unanimous tradition in Jewish and Christian circles until the time of the Reformation that Solomon was the author. Martin Luther, however, denied that Solomon wrote it, and his denial is accepted by virtually all scholars, radical and conservative alike, today.

A later author is simply making Solomon his spokesman. Solomon was chosen because of his fame and because he could be pictured as actually having experienced all the various pursuits of happiness that the author wished to discuss. Not the slightest dishonesty was intended by the author when he made use of this literary device.

The language of the book is entirely too late for the time of Solomon. It is quite different from the earlier books of the Old Testament and quite similar

to the very latest. The Aramaic influence is unmistakable. Some scholars see Greek influence, but that is not so clear.

Solomon could not have spoken of kings and specifically of the oppressiveness of kings in the way that the author of our book does. The Jews were enjoying great glory and prosperity in the time of Solomon, but Ecclesiastes comes from a time of misfortune, tyranny and oppression. The author speaks of all those who were before him in Jerusalem (1:16 and 2:7), referring to kings, although David was the only king in Jerusalem before the real Solomon. The fact that the speaker is supposed to have said, "I was king over Israel in Jerusalem" (1:12) shows rather clearly that it was a fictional Solomon that was intended, because the real king continued to reign until his death.

It is generally agreed that Solomon was not the author and that the book is to be dated at a much later date than his time. By any fair estimate of the language, it can hardly be dated earlier than about 400 B. C., and it is probable that even that is too early. The similarity to Greek philosophical thought and even Greek language makes it rather probable that it is to be dated in the Greek period, after 333 B. C. Some feel that its nearest neighbor is Ecclesiasticus, which is to be dated about 180 B. C. At any rate, Ecclesiastes is to be considered one of the very latest of the Old Testament books.

The Unity of the Book

In one sense, the general integrity of the book is accepted by all scholars. There is the same late style of language throughout the book. The same almost cynical pessimism is found almost everywhere.

Yet many scholars cannot believe that the book is free from various interpolations. It is thought that these

interpolations were made to try to make the book conform to the orthodox Jewish faith. The vast majority of the book is to be attributed to the original author, and those verses which seem to contradict his prevailing mood are attributed to one or more editors.

It is certainly true that there are many apparent contradictions in Ecclesiastes. But do those prove difference of authorship or simply a change of mood of the exceedingly honest and frank author as he faced the often seemingly contradictory aspects of life? Again we must admit that certainty is impossible. The conflict is there, whether it is within the mind of just the one person, the author, or between the author and his editors.

The Contents of the Book

The author is trying to solve the manifold problems of life as he saw it. To a certain extent he is dealing with the same great problem that is presented in the book of Job, though his approach to it is very different. Why do the good people suffer? Why do the evil often seem to prosper? What is good? What is evil? Is there any real difference between the two? Can anything in this life be considered worthwhile? Is there any such thing as a life beyond? If so, is there any difference to be made there between the good and the bad?

The author certainly raises the problems that confront any thinking man who seeks to understand what life is all about. Naturally he does not solve them all. He sees the vanity of many of the things the world is accustomed to consider valuable. He continues to hold to his belief in God. He cannot see that the good life always pays in this life, and he has very vague ideas about any life beyond the grave; yet the things that

he considers best are all the virtues, rather than the vices, of life.

We must not make the mistake of trying to judge this book in the light of the fuller revelation we have in the New Testament. The very problems that are raised in Ecclesiastes show how much the New Testament message was needed.

The book seems to follow no logical train of thought, and so we shall make no attempt to give any outline of its contents.

XXXV.

THE BOOK OF ESTHER

This book receives its name from its chief character, Esther. Esther comes from a Persian word meaning "star." Esther's Jewish name, Hadassah (2:7), means "myrtle." Esther may have assumed a Persian name when she became queen, though she may well have had a Persian as well as a Jewish name before that time.

The Historicity of the Book

Many believe that Esther is a work of pure historical fiction. Others believe that every detail of the book is pure history. Still others believe that the author took a historical basis and built his story around it. All three of those positions may be held by consistent Conservatives.

The author of the book manifests a real knowledge of Persia and its customs. That may be due to the fact that his work is based on historic fact; it may be due simply to the fact that he constructed his historical background for his fictional story from some accurate reading or from conversations with those who had traveled in the east.

The king of Persia is called Ahasuerus in Esther. Various Persian kings have been identified with Ahasuerus, but the most likely identification is with Xerxes I, who ruled from 485 to 465 B. C. The description of Ahasuerus in Esther certainly harmonizes with the profligate picture of Xerxes painted by Herodotus.

There are points of real difficulty, however, in accepting the historical character of the book. Mordecai would have had to be well over a hundred years old to have

gone into captivity in the first deportation in 597 (2:6); and Esther, the child of his uncle, would not have been much younger. From what Herodotus tells us about Xerxes and his marriages it is impossible to fit Esther into the picture as his queen, and the story certainly makes Esther more than just one member of his harem; Herodotus even says that the queen had to be chosen from one of the seven royal families of Persia. Of course, Herodotus may have been wrong about these things, but at any rate we must recognize a difficulty.

On the other hand, there are marks that seem to indicate the fictional character of the book.[1] There are tremendously large figures involved. Haman promised to pay some twenty million dollars for the privilege of exterminating the Jews. The Jews killed more than 75,000 Gentiles in a day. Haman's gallows were 75 feet high. The feast of the king lasted six months. The maidens received their beauty treatment for a year. These things look like the exaggerations of fiction, though they cannot be proved to be contrary to fact. Then there is a carefully worked out symmetry in the book, which looks rather fictional — though truth is sometimes stranger than fiction.

It is somewhat improbable that a king of Persia should have elevated two Jews to the prominent places occupied by Esther and Mordecai, especially after he had signed an edict for their extermination. It is somewhat improbable that he would have signed such an edict and then have forgotten that he had done it, though it is possible that he signed it when he was too drunk to know what he was doing.

Some Radical scholars think that the whole story is simply an adaptation of an old Babylonian story, Esther

(1) The Conservative recognizes, of course, that religious truth can be taught by fiction just as well as by historic fact; most, if not all, of the parables of Jesus were probably fiction.

being Istar, Mordecai Marduk, and the villain Haman Hamman, the god of the Babylonian's enemies, the Elamites.

How much, if any, of the book is real history cannot now be determined.

Date and Authorship

The name of the author is, of course, unknown. He knew something about Persia, but that does not prove that he lived there.

The story was placed in Persian times, probably in the reign of Xerxes I (485-465 B. C.). Those who consider the book real history tend to place the composition of the book rather close to that time. The first verses of the book seem to place the story in the somewhat distant past.

Those who consider the book largely or wholly fictional tend to date the book much later. In language, the author seems to be consciously trying to imitate the classical Hebrew, but he gives himself away time and again by his use of very late Hebrew and Aramaic forms and constructions; he seems to be trying to use Hebrew when it had become a dead language.

When we seek to find a time in the history of the Jews that might have called forth such a book, we are almost compelled to go to rather late times. Probably the best time that has been suggested on the basis of what we actually know of Jewish history is well after the time of Antiochus Epiphanes, when the Maccabees were having real success in throwing off the Gentile bondage. Our knowledge of post-Exilic Judaism is too incomplete, however, for us to say that this is the only time that might have given rise to the book.

The book is certainly one of the latest books of the Old Testament; it may even be as late as 100-150 B. C.

The Contents of the Book

On any theory, the book is a well prepared short story. There is unity of theme and movement in the action. The characters are graphically drawn.

We may suggest the following brief outline:

1. *Esther becomes queen in place of Vashti,* 1-2.
2. *The villain, Haman, plans the destruction of Esther, Mordecai and the Jews,* 3-7.
3. *The heroes triumph over the villain,* 8:1-9:19.
4. *Epilogue: the feast of Purim, the greatness of Mordecai,* 9:20-10:3.

The Purpose and Value of the Book

Two primary purposes can be seen in the book of Esther.

In the first place, the author wished to show forth the Jewish nation as a superior and a blessed nation. The nationalistic fervor is clearly evident. Esther is the most beautiful maiden in the realm. Mordecai receives the highest honors possible. In spite of all the hatred of their enemies, the Jews come out victorious.

In the second place, the author wished to give the origin of the Jewish feast of Purim. He places it back in Persian days and connects it with the rejoicing of the Jews after the slaughter of their enemies. Outside of the book of Esther the first mention that we have of that feast is in II Maccabees, a book written about the beginning of the Christian era. Some scholars believe that Esther was written to try to give an ancient justification for a modern feast; others even think that the author of Esther was responsible for the start of Purim. We must recognize that we know all too little about this feast.

Esther is the only book in the whole Bible which does not even use the word God. Formal religious ideas

play a very minor part in the book, though it is not fair to say that religion plays no part. We see clearly the providential care of God for His people. God has cared for His ancient people in wonderful ways, even in the face of powerful enemies; and God will care for all His people today as well. Of course, no attempt should be made to justify the vindictive spirit that occurs all too often; Jesus has shown us a much higher way of treating our enemies than we see here.

XXXVI.

THE BOOK OF DANIEL

The book receives its name from its principal character. There is a tradition that Daniel was also the author of the book, but that must be considered later. The word Daniel means "God is my Judge."

The Contents of the Book

The book is made up of two parts, each part containing six chapters. The first part tells several stories about Daniel and his three friends in their life in Babylon during the time of the Exile. Under temptations of all kinds, these heroes were true to their faith in Jehovah. And in each case their fidelity was openly rewarded.

The second part consists of a series of visions. Several great empires are to rise and fall. The final result will be the triumph of the Kingdom of God and His Messiah.

The following outline may be suggested:

1. *Stories from the lives of Daniel and his three friends,* 1-6.
    a. The four refuse to defile themselves with the royal food, 1.
    b. Daniel interprets Nebuchadnezzar's dream of the image, 2.
    c. The three refuse to worship the king's image, 3.
    d. Daniel interprets Nebuchadnezzar's dream of the tree; Nebuchadnezzar's madness, 4.
    e. Belshazzar's feast; Belshazzar is succeeded by Darius the Mede, 5.
    f. Daniel is delivered from the lions' den, 6.

2. *The visions of Daniel,* 7-12.
   a. The four beasts, 7.
   b. The ram and the goat, 8.
   c. Daniel's prayer; the vision of the seventy weeks, 9.
   d. The man, 10-12.

The Interpretation of the Book

The interpretation of this book has been greatly debated. We cannot go into the details, but it is necessary to understand in general some of the approaches that have been taken in regard to the book.

Most Conservatives place the composition of the book in the Exilic times. They believe that the first half of the book is historically true and that the second half gives true predictions of the future. Some of these scholars believe that the predictions go down as far as the Macedonian, or Greek, empire and then on to eschatology; others believe that the Roman empire is definitely predicted. The first group make the four empires of chapters 2 and 7 the Babylonian, the Medan, the Persian and the Greek; the others make them the Babylonian, the Medo-Persian, the Greek and the Roman. The first group make the seventy weeks of years come to the time of Antiochus Epiphanes, while the second group make them go to the time of Christ. Some of the latter group make the last half of the seventieth week go down to eschatological times to their period of great tribulation between the rapture and revelation, believing that the prophetic clock stopped when the Jews left their land and will start again only when they are restored to Palestine.

There are those who believe that the book was composed at the time of Antiochus Epiphanes for the purpose of giving courage to the Jews of that day to remain true to God in the face of the vicious attempts of

Antiochus to abolish completely the Jewish faith. They believe that the book is much like the book of Revelation, an apocalypse in form, written to keep the Christians of its day true in spite of the terrible persecutions of the Emperor Domitian.

It is clear that Radical criticism is forced to take the interpretation that places the composition of the book in the times of Antiochus Epiphanes, because it is impossible for a true Radical to believe in real predictive prophecy; no one living in the time of the Exile could have predicted so accurately the rise and fall of the various empires and especially the details of the times of Antiochus.

The Conservative, believing in the possibility of predictive prophecy, is not compelled to choose that alternative. Nor is he necessarily bound to take one of the interpretations that place the book in the time of the Exile. He is free to look at all the evidence and follow the view that seems to have most in its favor. Some Conservatives may be found holding all the views mentioned above.

Date and Authorship

These matters are intimately connected with the various methods of interpretation.

At times the book refers to Daniel in the third person; at times, in the first person. Probably the simplest explanation of that fact would be that Daniel was the author of the book, and that has been the generally accepted Jewish and Christian tradition. We may note, however, that the Jewish Talmud says that the men of the great synagogue wrote the book in the time of Ezra and Nehemiah. It is entirely possible that another author may have made Daniel speak in the first person at times for dramatic purposes, a very common literary practice to this day.

Jesus, in Matthew 24:15, referred to the "abomination of desolation, which was spoken of through Daniel the prophet." Many feel that this proves definitely that Jesus has decided the problem of authorship in favor of Daniel, but this cannot be considered quite positive proof even for the Conservative. Jesus may have known that the book was written by someone else and still have spoken of it in a popular way. Or the "emptying" of which Paul spoke may have kept the incarnate Jesus from having complete knowledge about certain non-essential things[1]; He may simply have used the current tradition.

There are certain places where recent archaeology has shown that the book gives a correct picture of Exilic times in certain details. It is now recognized that Nebuchadnezzar built the new Babylon (Dan. 4:30) and that Belshazzar was king when Cyrus took Babylon (Dan. 5). Archaeology has refuted some of the criticism of the negative critics in regard to the historical truth of Daniel.

On the other hand, there are still real historical problems in those parts of Daniel that relate to the times of the Exile. The first statement in 1:1 about Nebuchadnezzar besieging Jerusalem in the third year of Jehoiakim is very difficult to handle. The use of the word "Chaldeans" in the sense of "diviners" seems to be an anachronism. The Darius the Mede of 5:31 cannot be placed in the times as we know them. Belshazzar is considered the son of Nebuchadnezzar, though early historical documents bring him in much later. History knows nothing of the madness of Nebuchadnezzar reported in Daniel. These and similar problems may be completely solved some day. At present, however, they seem to indicate that the author was not very much at home in the details of the time of the Exile.

(1) He said, for example, that He did not know the time of His own coming again.

However, when we come to the time of Antiochus Epiphanes, we find that the book abounds in details, and that those details correspond exactly with the facts as we know them. The student must be referred to a critical commentary to see the full force of this argument. Those who take the book down into Roman times find it impossible to make such a close parallel with any set of facts in that period.

No clear reference to the book of Daniel can be found before the times of Antiochus. Ezekiel (14:14, 20; 28:3) refers to a Daniel along with Noah and Job. He may have been the Daniel of the book of Daniel, though it would have been somewhat strange for Ezekiel to speak of one of his contemporaries in the same company as Noah and Job; on the other hand, it is somewhat strange that the older books of the Old Testament did not mention Daniel back in the times of Noah and Job if such a famous Daniel lived in those earlier days. Daniel is not mentioned in the catalogue of heroes in Ecclesiasticus; this is a rather significant silence, though it does not constitute a positive proof. But after the time of Antiochus, we have many clear references. There is much in favor of the theory that the book originated at that time and won immediate acceptance because of its timeliness.

About half of Daniel (2:4-7:28) is written in Aramaic rather than in Hebrew. The Hebrew of the book is rough and is filled with Aramaic influences, seemingly indicating that the author's primary language was Aramaic. There are several Persian words and even a few Greek words in the book. Linguistically the book is most closely related to the latest books of the Old Testament; the style seems to belong to the Greek period rather than to the Exilic or early post-Exilic period.

There are certain theological ideas that likewise seem to point to a late date for the book, a rather clear doctrine of life beyond the grave and a rather full use of angels.

While no one of these matters can be considered positive proof, it must be admitted that together they give real weight to the theory that the book was written in the times of Antiochus Epiphanes and that the book is a true apocalypse. On that theory it is possible to believe that Daniel was a historic character living in the time of the Exile. How much of the stories of the first part of the book was based on fact and how much on the literary imagination of the author could not be determined. The visions of the latter half would be interpreted as giving a survey of recent history and a triumphant prediction of the ultimate triumph of God and His people over all their enemies. That view would not necessarily take away the true inspiration of the book.[1] It would make it come forth at a time of great crisis and meet the critical needs of that time, just as Revelation was to meet the crisis of the persecutions of Domitian.

The main objection to this theory is that it would make the book, when judged by modern standards, a pious fraud. Daniel is made to give predictions about future events when actually someone is writing the history of past events, turning them into prophecy and placing them in the mouth of a person who died long before, if he ever lived at all. That objection is so strong that most Conservatives believe that it is impossible for them to hold to the theory of the Maccabean dating. Some, however, believe that the author was using a literary practice that was well understood in that day; he did not try to deceive anyone, and no one

(1) It is interesting to remember that Calvin was not sure that Peter wrote II Peter, and that Luther was sure that Solomon was not the author of Ecclesiastes.

was deceived, any more than one of us would think that Werfel was trying to give us an actual history of the life and words of the prophet Jeremiah in his imaginative book, *Hearken Unto the Voice.* Probably no one believed for a moment that the reputed authors actually wrote the many pseudepigraphical books of that time, such as the *Apocalypse of Enoch.* These books, however, did not become a part of the canon; so the parallelism is not perfect.

While some Conservatives believe that the evidence is strong enough to make them believe that the book was composed in Maccabean times, probably the majority will continue to hold to the belief that it was written in or shortly after the Exile. The detail with which Maccabean events were predicted makes it highly probable that the final empire definitely predicted was the Macedonian, though some will continue to prefer the belief that it was the Roman.

For those who hold to the later dating, the book is to be dated toward the end of the period of intense persecution under Antiochus Epiphanes, from 168 to 165 B. C. Some of them attempt an even more exact dating, but that would be largely hypothetical. The Exilic dating would be some time about 500 B. C.

The Unity of the Book

It is quite evident that there are two major sections in the book, the first six and the last six chapters, the stories and the visions. Likewise it is clear that two different languages are used, Aramaic for 2:4 to 7:28 and Hebrew for the rest.

Some scholars have attempted to split the book because of these facts. The divisions of subject matter do not coincide with those of language, however. And on any view of the interpretation of the book the theory

that the book is a unity best harmonizes with all the facts. The author may have made use of traditional stories for the first part of his book, but the book as a whole is almost certainly the work of one author.

The Value of the Book

On any view of the interpretation, the value of this book is very high. The author believes firmly and is trying to get all his readers to believe that God is reigning over all the world, that kingdoms rise and fall at His will, that He cares for those who are true to Him and that victory and a blessed eternity await them — all messages of vital importance, especially during times of crisis.

XXXVII.

THE ABIDING VALUE OF THE OLD TESTAMENT

The student who completes a study in the introduction to the Old Testament naturally has a feeling of doubt and uncertainty. He has been confronted with many problems. He has been shown the many solutions that have been suggested. Often no certain solution can be given. There are many things that we should all like to know about the background of the Old Testament.

We should recognize clearly that the subject of Old Testament introduction is still one in which much work needs to be done. Scholars are still working in all branches of it. From their labors we may be able to obtain more and more of the light we need to illuminate the places that are now dark.

While all of us are loath to admit our ignorance about many of the matters of Old Testament introduction, we should recognize clearly that the most important values of the Old Testament do not depend in the least upon our being able to identify the authors of all its books, to give dates for them, to decide matters of literary integrity and historicity, and so on. God can speak through an unknown author fully as well as through one whose name we are able to determine. A man of the second century could be the mouthpiece of God just as well as a man of the fifteenth century. God can teach truths through parables as well as through history. One real value of a study of this kind is that it should enable the student to separate between matters of primary importance and those of purely secondary importance.

Let us recognize that a study of introduction is not meant to take the place of a study of the Old Testament

itself. Introduction should give the student some of the tools that will enable him to understand the Old Testament better when he does read it.

The Old Testament is a library of books with a unique history and value. It contains many different types of literature. It was written by an unknown number of God-inspired men — men who lived and worked over a period of over a thousand years.

In the Old Testament we have a history of a remarkable people, a people endowed by God with a genius for religion. We see how God chose them from among all the nations. We see God's tender care for them. We see Him as He reveals more and more about Himself to them as they are able to take it in. The history does not run smoothly at times. There is many a tragedy recorded in the pages of Scripture. But finally "the fulness of time" came, and from this great nation came the Saviour, who had been so clearly foreshadowed throughout the Old Testament. This One showed the true spiritual meaning of God's former revelation by His words and His life. Then He gave Himself as the Lamb of God to take away the sins of the world. He was the fulfilment of the Law and the Prophets. The Old Testament was His Bible, just as it was the Bible of the Jewish nation and is still an important part of the Bible of the Christian Church.

The coming of the Christ made obsolete certain features of the Old Testament. There is no longer any place for the elaborate ritual of the Jewish sacrificial system. Certain higher ethical standards have been revealed to us.

We could justify the study of the Old Testament simply because of its influence upon the Jews, simply as a document of importance in the history of the devel-

opment of religion. But there is still far more in the Old Testament than that.

God spoke to His ancient people through the sacred writers. And many of the words He spoke to them long ago are as true and appropriate today as they were three thousand years ago. Eternal principles do not change. Human nature has changed little if any. Man is still carrying on the fight against sin. The forms of sin have changed little through the centuries. The virtues and eternal values are still the same. We still thrill to the stories of ancient heroism and fidelity to God. We see the parts played by the prophets, the priests, the kings. The moral law still calls us to higher realms of holiness, especially as we see Jesus' interpretation of that law.

The Old Testament records the progressive preparation that God made for the sending of His Son into the world. After the creation of the world, man rebelled against the Creator in sin. The dark shadow of that accursed thing has hung over mankind ever since. But as God pronounced a curse upon the first sinners, He introduced a tiny ray of light into the darkness when He said that the seed of the woman would bruise the serpent's head. As time goes on we see the fierce battle raging between the forces of good and evil, between God and Satan. We see God trying to impress upon His people the importance of sin and the necessity of deliverance from sin. The prophets looked forward to the coming of One who would be a Saviour and to a time when Satan would be defeated and the Kingdom of God and of His Christ would be established over all the world. Jesus came to meet the needs that had been revealed in the Old Testament. He came to fulfill the hopes raised by the Old Testament promises. When He came, He put His stamp of approval upon the Old

Testament as the very Word of God. The Old Testament was His Bible.

With the single exception of the New Testament itself, no book has ever exerted such an influence — and an influence for good—over so many persons down through the centuries as the Old Testament. Surely it merits our most diligent and intelligent study today.

Appendix I.

THE CHRONOLOGY OF THE OLD TESTAMENT

This is a very large subject and one that is far too complicated for the average student to go into very deeply. We shall simply call attention to some of the factors involved and then present a table of dates that may be considered approximately correct.

The Old Testament itself has many dates in it, and they should be considered as a primary source. But, unfortunately for the modern mind, there are many complicating factors in the biblical dates. At times there are definite gaps, periods for which we have no chronological information whatever from the Old Testament. Then there are times when parallel accounts, such as in Kings and Chronicles, give somewhat different dates, at least in the best texts that we have of those books. Then the manuscripts in Hebrew and in the versions vary more about dates and ages than in any other respect; there are many wide divergences between the Massoretic Hebrew and the Septuagint in this field. The student of the Old Testament should always give serious consideration to the Old Testament chronological material, but he should be aware of the problems connected with it.

We can also get much help from sources outside of the Old Testament, from Egyptian, Assyrian, Persian and Greek literature and archaeology. At times these records are so complete and clear and are so clearly contemporaneous with certain Old Testament events that we are able to give very exact dates for those events; at times we are not so fortunate. At times there are contradictions between the extra-biblical dates and the

dates of our best texts of the Bible; then we must be confronted with the possibilities of a mistake in the extra-biblical source, an error in textual transmission of the Bible, or an error of a minor historical nature in the Bible itself.

The student should realize clearly that the question of exact date is seldom of any real importance in Old Testament studies. Approximate date and relative date are sufficient for all practical purposes. Calendars and clocks played a very minor part in the lives of the ancient Orientals.

Some of the following dates have been discussed somewhat more fully in the body of the Introduction. Some of them may be considered very exact; others, only approximate. We shall not attempt to go back of Abraham, as students vary widely in their interpretation of the large numbers back of him.

The dates at the top of the page of many of the King James Bibles were computed by Archbishop Ussher, who died in 1656. They should not be taken too seriously, though as a rule they are not very far wrong.

All dates are, of course, B. C. Question marks indicate considerable uncertainty. The hypothetical documents of the Pentateuch are included, though their existence and dates are recognized as very uncertain.

1950	Abraham and Hammurabi
1450	The Exodus
1100	The time of Ruth
1010–971	The reign of David
972–933	The reign of Solomon
933	The division of the Kingdom
900–750	The J and E documents (?)
760	Prophecy of Amos

750	Time of Jonah
750–735	Prophecy of Hosea
740–700	Prophecies of Isaiah and Micah
721	Fall of Samaria; end of Northern Kingdom
626–586	Prophecy of Jeremiah
625	Prophecy of Zephaniah
621	Revival under Josiah; the D document (?)
615	Prophecy of Nahum
612	Capture of Nineveh by Babylonians
607	The battle of Carchemish
600	Prophecy of Habakkuk
597	Capture of Jerusalem by Nebuchadnezzar
592–570	Prophecy of Ezekiel
586	Fall of Jerusalem; Book of Lamentations
550	Second Isaiah (?); Book of Job (?)
539	Capture of Babylon by Cyrus
536	Return of Jews to Jerusalem under Cyrus' edict
520	Prophecy of Haggai
520–518	Prophecy of Zechariah
500	Document P and completion of Pentateuch (?); Exilic date for Book of Daniel
458	Ezra comes to Jerusalem
450	Prophecies of Malachi and Obadiah; Book of Ruth (?)
445	Nehemiah comes to Jerusalem
400	Prophecy of Joel (?); Book of Jonah (?); Song of Solomon (?)
333	Alexander overthrows Persian Empire at Issus
323	Death of Alexander; division of his kingdom

300	The Chronicler (?); Book of Ecclesiastes (?)
175	Antiochus Epiphanes becomes king
168	Desecration of temple by Antiochus; Maccabean date for Book of Daniel (?)
150	Book of Esther (?)

Appendix II.

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